University of Alberta

Troubling Experiences:

Female Subjectivity and Fear in Teaching

by

Susan Casey Walsh

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

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All that we need to decide, each day, when we are ready and the light is right, is where and when to draw the line. (Grumet, 1988, p. 94)

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a dissertation entitled *Troubling Experiences: Female Subjectivity and Fear in Teaching* submitted by Susan Casey Walsh in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dedication

for those who open their hands to let go

and for those who want to . . .

Abstract

What can experiences of fear and pain show us about subjectivity, especially female subjectivity, in the context of teaching? In what ways can artistic processes such as writing and visual art help us un-cover such experiences, search further, re-search—and ultimately resymbolize them? What insights can we derive that will inform our practices in teacher education and professional development?

The study is undertaken on at least two different levels: that of the actual writing of this text and that of a group of female teachers, including me as participant-researcher, who met over the course of a year to explore experiences of fear in teaching through writing, visual art, and conversation. In the collective, we wrote about our difficult teaching experiences, shared the writing, and responded to one another's stories through drawing, painting, sculpture, writing, and talk. The process of creating found poetry from the transcripts of the meetings functions as an interpretive practice.

The writing of this text functions too as a means of interpreting what happened in the collective. Various theoretical influences such as feminist poststructuralism and feminist spirituality are interwoven. Also, various forms of writing are juxtaposed including: the found poetry from the transcripts, original poetry, expressive writing, visual images from the artwork created in the collective process, and traditional academic exposition.

Through the writing process and through the collective process as methods of inquiry, the study provides useful means of resymbolizing experience and thereby of unsettling taken-for-granted ways of reading same, processes that are themselves potentially useful in teacher education and professional development.

Themes that arose with regard to female subjectivity and fear in teaching include: a sense of homelessness that arises in a male-dominated symbolic, a physical experience of space that is tightly circumscribed and often perceived of as unsafe, a relational way of being that erases the individuality and separateness so valued in educational settings, and the contradictory expectations of teacher-as-role that is, at times, construed as personal inadequacy.

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I am grateful to have had the privilege to pursue my passion for learning and my love of writing in the context of this work. Through it, I have come to understand more clearly the power of collective energy and imagination as well as my own limitations and points of resistance. So many have contributed—and in so many different ways. I am aware as I write this that the more slippery, nebulous, and fleeting ways that some have shared in this work will remain unacknowledged in words. I do wish to articulate, however, what I can, and to express my sincere thanks to:

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i.

& space

She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by a movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes. The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 101)

I begin with fear. A story.[1]

June, 1993. I attend a writing retreat in Crowsnest Pass with Em,[2] a poet whose work I have long admired. On the first night, Em asks us, "What is essential writing?" We discuss this for hours. She ends by telling us to take away the ten pages we have submitted and to find one phrase of essential writing. A night long task for most of us.*

Our meeting the next day is brief. She tells us to take away the bit we have excavated from our words, to write another ten pages from it. To come back in the afternoon. I am already weary.

It continues in this way. I begin to hate it. I'm lonely. There is no one to talk to. And I don't like the food. The rooms are like hospital rooms. I phone my husband and cry. "I can't do this," I say. "It's too hard."

"Come home if you want," he says. "Why torture yourself?"

I stay.

We are shaping pieces now. All I can feel is the inadequacy of what I am doing. Maybe I am just not a good writer. I think to myself that it is good to find this out now before I waste any more time fancying myself a poet. I reconsider going home.

But I don't. I keep writing. Trying to get past something. Or to something that I can't quite articulate. It pulls me. Compels me. Everything I write is met with polite comments from the members of the group whom I now respect as excellent and critical readers.

It is the night before the last day. The middle of the night, and I can't stop writing. I can't believe what I am writing about. High school. My struggles with food, with dieting. Inner voices I haven't heard before. Different fonts. A play with space. I finish a draft and walk the halls. Tanya is up, typing and drinking wine. She reads what I have written and offers suggestions. I rewrite.*

In the morning, we drive to a campground to read something we have written as a celebration and good bye. I feel sick. I don't know if I can read this piece. I'm afraid of it. Can't believe my words, how they came out. Maybe I'll stay silent.

But I do read it. Can feel the power of my words. How the group is silent, listening. At the end, no one says anything. I feel shaky, like I might cry. Em looks at me and says, "Wow."

The piece is later published in a literary journal.
My writing has never been the same again.
Neither have I.

***

I have always been a writer. As a little girl, I kept a notebook beside my bed so I could write down my thoughts and ideas when I woke up in the middle of the night. Often, I wrote in the dark because I was afraid that I would forget what I was thinking if I didn't get it down right away. Writing in the dark, also the title of my master's thesis (1990), has long been a practice for me. The story of my experience at Crowsnest Pass, however, is more about writing *with* the dark. It was the first time that I had really stayed with fear instead of avoiding, writing all around it. The process was intense, liberating, frightening.

The workshop at Crowsnest Pass occurred around the middle of what has been a spiritual quest spanning almost twenty years. I have explored meditation groups, healing circles, a twelve step program, texts from various religious traditions, bodywork in the form of creative movement, running, T'ai Chi, yoga, and qi gong, as well as worked with runes, tarot cards, angels, goddesses, color, art, and energy in a broader sense. My search has undoubtedly been inspired by my father's strong reluctance to allow us access to organized religion. He had been raised a Catholic in Scotland and proclaimed himself an atheist in his early twenties as he travelled the world. Fishing was much better than Sunday school, he told us; everything you need is inside you. Coming from a poor family in Saskatchewan, my mother experienced religion in a different way; church offers of food, gifts, fellowship—even salvation—were mixed with strictures regarding what was acceptable and what was not. Her psychic abilities too have long caused her consternation. The strange combination of my mother's and father's spiritual orientations prompted me to look beyond organized religion to fulfill my spiritual needs. Though I have felt scattered and ungrounded at times, the work I have done in the area of feminist spirituality,[3] both practically and academically, assures me that this kind of search in a number of alternative fields is characteristic of many women. Caron (1993) notes that in all its diverse forms, from inside of various religious traditions to lone seekers working on the edges, feminist spirituality shows "ways that women are naming their experiences of the holy and seeking meaning in their lives" (p. 165). What has struck me most

powerfully as I have travelled these various spiritual paths is that a common theme emerges. In this wide array of contexts, women are working with their experiences of fear and pain; they are willing to share their stories. In feminist spirituality, as in all feminist endeavors and practices, the purpose of the work is "to overcome the oppression of and discrimination against women which is deeply embedded in our social and cultural institutions" (King, 1993, p. 4). Women's subjectivity is a centralizing impetus.

the writer worries that the reader may dismiss all of this right now that more of this snivelling feminist self-pity stuff has had its day and can't we just move on? a big part of the writer agrees wishes she could move on wants to write about something else maybe anything else but

the text keeps poking its nose around corners looking in the basement tossing out junk searching through boxes long kept closed the text insists that the story needs to be written rewritten again and again until[4]

My master's study involved an examination of exploratory creative writing by Canadian women and an investigation into the work of Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray, among others—an attempt to understand language and female subjectivity from feminist poststructuralist and psychoanalytic perspectives. I experimented with my own writing, personally as well as in the academic arena. Fear and pain emerged as important themes in my poetry and cross-genre work as well as in the writing I studied. Throughout the research, though I was intellectually immersed, I felt a nagging sense of something missing. I kept wondering where the spirituality was in all of this theory. I could not articulate what I meant by spirituality at the time, only that it seemed to be about something immutable, ongoing--and therefore seemingly at odds with what I felt was being espoused by poststructuralism. I understood the latter as a process whereby we learn to be more critical of how we have been shaped through competing discourses. A never-ending process that fragmented the subject, dissolved her center as the coherent and self-conscious individual of humanism.[5] While I was awakened to the possibilities of such ideas as ways of transforming our being&knowing in the world, I could not let go of my belief that in the human process of meaning-making, there had to be something constant to return to.

While doing my doctoral work, I began doing yoga again, a practice I had visited twenty years before. I wrote about it, along with other types of bodywork I was exploring. I wrote too about mindfulness. Still, I could not connect the spiritual aspect of the work in which I was immersed academically as well as personally with the feminist poststructural influences of my studies. I wondered if I would have to omit everything 'spiritual' I had included thus far. After all, I have been told, a doctoral dissertation can't be about everything. As a writer, I know that sometimes the parts you love best have to go. In the library one day, searching for books by Luce Irigaray that I hadn't yet read, I came across one published in 2002 called *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community.* I was excited. This one hadn't even been listed on the computer. There it sat, a tiny innocuous looking little tome. A new piece of work by one of my favorite theorists. As I read, I got goose bumps. Here was Irigaray explaining in more depth her experiences with yoga, her thoughts on breathing.[6] Here was a well-recognized feminist poststructuralist writer integrating what I had been so uneasily trying to connect. Here she was elucidating a practice that integrates bodymindspirit, the many dimensions of which I too had felt, though fleetingly, uneasily, and rather inarticulately.

I now know that my understanding of spirituality was limited. As a term, it is slippery, escaping at every edge with multiple and contradictory connotations.[7] Even so, I do not want to be afraid of it, to avoid it. I do, however, have to try to understand how I have come to believe in and accept a power or energy—a god—external to me, transcendent. Such a belief is insidious and disempowering, especially when the god is figured in male terms. While the immanent, creative energy that underpins feminist spirituality is helpful, I have difficulty moving beyond a surface understanding, what seems like mere intellectual engagement with such ideas. I have difficulty seeing how I have been shaped by such foundational beliefs, what my investments are in staying where I am. Bodywork is one way to move outside what I have come to know and believe; through it, I begin to sense something different. Here, 'spirituality' is a place where distinctions between inside and outside are dissolved, where the boundaries of skin, the edges of bodies are called into question. It is a place where bodymindspirit feels deeply intertwined, where intellect steps back and the limitations of 'categorical reasoning' dissolve (see Tomm,

1995, pp. 36-38). It is a place where the arbitrary separation between epistemology and ontology becomes problematic, where being&knowing commingle.[8] Tomm (1995) writes:

> An important Buddhist insight is the inseparability of ontological reality and epistemology. (p. 16) . . . The reality of [a] perception is necessary for the reality 'out there' in the same way that the reality 'out there' is required for the perception. The dichotomy between inner consciousness and external reality is a false one in spiritual consciousness. Spiritual experiences have not been widely accepted as sources of reliable knowledge in Western culture largely because they do not include a separation between 'subjective' and 'objective' knowledge. (pp. 36-37)

In feminist spirituality, as in much feminist work, boundaries are called into question. Tomm (1995, pp. 16-17) and Klein (1995, 1997), both Buddhist scholars, urge us to rewrite transcendence as movement outside of linguistic constructs, and both elucidate how different subjective *states* such as mindfulness can facilitate the process, something I explore further in the section entitled 'breathing.' Points of intersection between feminist spirituality and feminist poststructuralism become more apparent. A concern with shifting borders, reconceptualizing, maybe even re-experiencing subjectivity, questions about language and its limitations. Movement into an uncertain & space.

Amid the constant flux and changeability, the confusions of border crossings that both feminist spirituality and feminist poststructuralism suggest to me, I still feel a strong desire for something immutable, a need for some kind of coherence. A place to return to. I have come to read this as the need to choose a practice or practices that are in themselves constant places. Places where one can go deeper, dwell. Wake up to the multidimensionality of experience, and abandon a solely teleological orientation to living in the world where the eye looks ahead always—and pause instead, notice. Not go anywhere in particular. Sink deeper into what is. Choose to pay attention. Kabat-Zinn (1994) connects the terms 'practice' and 'path' and notes that, "in Buddhism, meditation practice is considered a path—the path of mindfulness." (p. 87). Fox (1991) says, "A path is not goal-oriented. A path is *the way itself;* . . . a sacred seeing goes on there. (p. 12). Sumara (2002a, pp. xiii-xviii; 2002b) outlines how reading, as ongoing and repeated

engagements with a particular text, can function as practice, a way of deepening and revising insights, both in research and in literary endeavors; "rereadings of the texts create a form of mindfulness, similar to a meditative practice, where researchers continue to collect new information and interpretations into the commonplace organized by their literary endeavors" (2002b, p. 242).

she remembers standing in the kitchen about sixteen years ago she was working on her master's degree at the time grappling with poststructuralist theory as her daughters played with their toys all around her she had a strong clear sense that her work was not about what *she doing but* how *she was doing it about trying to find a way of being that exists outside of what she had learned as a 'successful' way to be-in-the-world she has come to see this search as spiritual has come to know this work as painful*

practice is something
done under all
circumstances you don't become
tossed away by a high weekend or
a blue Monday it is something
close you do quietly regularly
and in doing it you face your
life everything comes up to fight
resist deny cajole you
(from Goldberg, 1993, pp. 188-189)

It is through practice then that I reconcile my understanding of the changeability and confusion of feminist poststructuralism with my need for some form of coherence as I live, write, teach, and re-search. I am learning to live in an & space that includes, that accepts what seems paradoxical, that goes deeper into what seems contradictory. It occurs to me too that though I have been searching all over for a practice that sustains me, I need only to return home, to listen more closely, be present to what has been with me all along. Writing *is* home—for some of us, it is our spiritual practice (see, too, Cameron, 1992; 1996; Goldberg, 1986, 1990,1993; Metzger, 1992). As practice, it is a way of being&knowing in the world, ever changing and also constant. How then can writing as practice serve as metaphor for how I understand my work as teacher, as researcher? In what ways is research a practice?

***

At the time I attended the writing workshop at Crowsnest Pass, I had just returned to teaching junior high after a master's degree and work at the university as a sessional instructor. I felt I needed more authority in my work with preservice teachers, more public school teaching experience. How could I profess to know anything about teaching when my scant two and a half years experience in the classroom was receding in my own memory? I sat in my office at the university one day and wrote the following in my journal.

I feel a rising sense of craziness, a wave of nausea. I feel so strongly that I can't keep trying to make the picture right from the outside—I have to feel okay from within. I have to get out of the university. I'm afraid to be here, afraid that I won't be able to handle anything I am faced with. I don't know why I feel this way when I have never felt this way before. I'm lying. I have always been this afraid. Afraid to be in my office. Afraid that students will ask me questions and that I'll have to make decisions. Afraid of handling situations and having others disapprove of what I decide. Tired of feeling inadequate. Afraid that others will find out how inadequate I really am. Trying so hard to keep up a front of competence. It's like I don't have enough experience to know enough about teaching—that everyone will find out what a fake I am. It's like I am always trying to think of an excuse or a rationalization for what I imagine I might screw up.

I return to fear then. Fear of being inadequate, of not having enough years in the classroom to teach the undergraduates. More experience in teaching school would fix this up, I thought. But it didn't. Working with students in junior high for six more years reinforced the fact that fear and pain is part of life, definitely part of a teaching life for some of us. I realized that when I left the teaching profession for the third time, this time to pursue doctoral studies, that I had lived many stories of fear and pain in teaching, that much of my experience in learning to teach had been hidden, private. Even in a graduate class that centered on the practice of teacher education where we were asked to consider what had shaped us as teachers, even in an environment where I felt reasonably safe to speak of my experiences, there were stories that remained untold. That were silenced out of shame and a deeply felt sense that my shortcomings were my own, and therefore something I had to work harder to overcome.

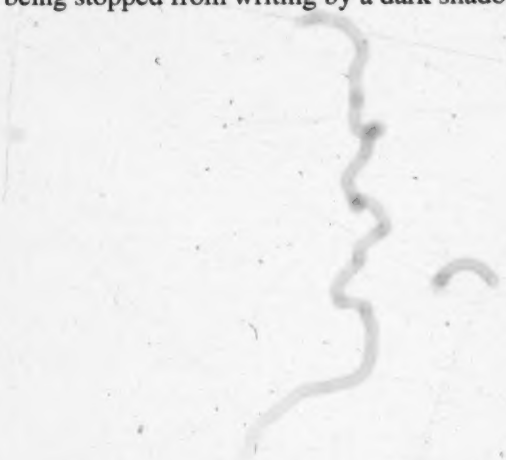
she can't help wondering now if this work is somehow about being a woman a female teacher she ignores all this tries to keep writing imagining she can piece things together into something she can accept but the pieces don't fit she wakes often in the night floating phrases come to her little fragments and images she has an inkling that her greatest fear is being a woman being found out she resists works hard to keep the secret uses up energy she used to imagine that she was immune to being affected could somehow escape played in men's spaces learned some tricks learned to keep herself safe but now she is beginning to see how old ways won't work any more the text has betrayed her spoken out of turn spoken loudly erupted without permission and where is she?

(she has set up a study that includes only women reads mainly feminist theorists writes against what she thinks of as patriarchal ways of being&knowing and still she resists including herself)

where is she?

***

being stopped from writing by a dark shadow



what does she see
staring out the window
dull and cloudy day
a gull sweeps upward
curves over the rooftop across the street
higher and higher it goes
out of sight
she doesn't move
keeps staring
empty
not empty
still
staring
what does she see

in my dream I see the face of my sister crying arms pinned shaking her head from side to side like she used to when I sat on her and threatened to spit my sister I want to help her comfort her but I am behind a glass pane cannot get through can only watch while she slips away does not help herself

trapped in spaces
the lines
voices
words

paralyzed
unbecoming
body of the text
text of the body
(k)notwords
constrained
restrained
and also just

strain(ed)
to filter
to stretch tightly
to push beyond the limit

walking on borders lines
lines that separate
walking the line
borders boundaries
bounded
bound
gagged

the blank page
too lined and unlined
what to
whisper whisper
oh prince come and
rescue me

the looming huge shadow pukes deliberately malevolently fear fear an angry cat claws
hisses a string of obscenities
I am stopped from

(the left hand sniffles when it wants to roar)

***

Early in my doctoral work, I wrote in my journal:

I have a deep sense, a dread almost, that I must investigate my identity as a teacher. This is something I must do. I can feel the fear. I see that I am approaching journal writing

this morning on computer, telling myself that I will save time later—but what about Julia Cameron, whom I have often quoted—who says that only in writing by hand, connecting with the body, can one get past fear to a place deep inside (1996, pp. 14-17). My own composing process in poetry has always been to begin with handwritten words in my journals. I am aware of my avoidance. And yet, I have prepared the way to be courageous. Have written through frightening experiences before. And know that I can do it. Writing my master's thesis, writing a difficult poetry manuscript has prepared me to face whatever this is, this unknown but deeply felt dread and fear. Whatever it is I need to let go . . . .

Britzman (1991) writes about "the underside of teaching, the private struggles we engage as we construct not only our teaching practices and all the relationships this entails, but our teaching voices and identities"—the opening of which can help to "uncover the dynamics, tensions, exclusions, and inclusions engendered by the activity of teaching" (p. 1; see also 1998, 2000). The underside, then, is a place to begin. A place from which to examine how subjectivity is experienced in relation to teaching. A. Neilsen's (1999) collection of teacher stories includes experiences of the underside. Palmer (1998) explores fear in teaching more explicitly within the context of our culture, what he terms a culture of fear, one based on divisiveness and fragmentation (pp. 35-60). He notes that we remain within such structures so as to retain our illusion of safety.

> We collaborate with the structures of separation because they promise to protect us against one of the deepest fears at the heart of being human—the fear of having a live encounter with alien "otherness," whether the other is a student, a colleague, a subject, or a self-dissenting voice within. We fear encounters in which the other is free to be itself, to speak its own truth, to tell us what we may not wish to hear. We want those encounters on our own terms, so that we can control their outcomes, so that they will not threaten our view of world and self. (p. 37)

Williamson (1992) poeticizes her experiences of having threatening messages pinned to her office door after teaching lesbian literature. Tompkins (1990) and McIntosh (1984) write about women, fear, and feeling like a fraud. Rumin (1998) investigates the discourse of the ideal teacher as women experience it and elucidates the shadow side of teaching. Krall (1994) and Grace & Benson (2000) explore fear and difficult teaching experiences through autobiography. Huber & Whelan (1999) examine stories of vulnerability in teaching through group conversations.

***

In this study, fear is addressed explicitly on at least two levels: through the process of writing as a research practice—a being-with-what-is—as well as through the courageous work of a group of women teachers who met with me as participant-researcher over the course of a year to share their experiences of fear and pain in teaching through spontaneous writing, through visual art, and through conversation. The actual process we undertook in the group is explained further in section iii: 'kiva' describes the process in detail and places it alongside the work of Haug (1987) and within the context of arts-informed research, 'letting go' highlights aspects of my personal experience with the process, and 'nomadic inquiry' provides a broader theoretical framework for research that operates within an ethic of uncertainty and the shifting boundaries of being&knowing. In the pages of this dissertation, what emerged from the work in the group, specifically, found poetry from the transcripts of the meetings, photographs of the artwork, and my research notes is interwoven with various theoretical influences and juxtaposed with various different forms of writing in the service of resymbolizing[9] troubling experiences in teaching and thereby reading them differently.

Some questions that have guided this study, and that reverberate among its various layers, include:
What can experiences of fear and pain show us about subjectivity, especially female subjectivity, in the context of teaching? In what ways can artistic processes such as writing and visual art help us un-cover such experiences, search further, re-search—and ultimately resymbolize them? What insights can we derive that will inform our practices in teacher education and professional development?

***

In this study, experience is crucial. The troubling experiences of a group of female teachers, experiences associated with fear and pain are re-presented, juxtaposed, resymbolized in various ways. And so, let us pause for a moment to trouble experience

itself, examine its relation to being&knowing. The belief that what we know is based on what can we can experience through the five senses and, to some extent, through introspection, is foundational to empiricism (see Lacey, 1996, pp.14, 88, 261-262). Experience, here, is seen as transparent, self-evident, inarguable even. As J. Scott (1992) notes, "when experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the [person] who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence upon which explanation is built" (p. 25). The epistemological framework itself remains intact.

We can problematize such a framework, however, by crossing borders, being critical of what seems 'natural,' self-evident. In her writing, Anzaldúa (1999), for example, moves among what might be considered the psychological, the spiritual, the intellectual, the artistic, the mythological, the physical. She opens up spaces through her travels. She reminds us that we do 'know' and that we do exist on many different levels, in various different ways, and that we are taught not to know, not to trust some aspects of our being&knowing. The subjugation of the psychic, the spiritual, how such ways of being&knowing are denounced as 'other-wordly' and 'not rational' in Western culture, though found to be acceptable in her indigenous culture, is but one such example (pp. 57-61; see also Black Elk & Lyon, 1991; Meyer, 1998; Tomm, 1995, pp. 1-65). The movement across boundaries of bodymindspirit through enlarging our capacities for different subjective states is one way to interrogate a framework that grounds itself in experience as culled mainly through the five senses.

Poststructuralism too has demonstrated that experience is problematic. Like subjectivity and language, it is neither neutral nor fixed. It is always contextualized in conscious and unconscious ways. Though feminists have made important gains through highlighting the experiences of women and other marginalized groups and thereby questioning the universality of Western philosophical and historical discourses, for example, such gestures cannot be considered an end in themselves. Experience must be further examined. J. Scott (1992) writes:

> We need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that which about knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way historicizes it as well as historicizes the identities it produces. (p. 26)

Experience itself then is contextually written, changeable. Like subjectivity, it is a site of intersecting discourses, some of which conflict with one another. There is no one clear explanation of experience that can be rendered immutable. Nor is there a rational and self-conscious individual who exists to read experience and present it in an impartial way. We can no longer simply appeal to the "authority of [our] experience" to validate our claims and also to silence others, disregard difference (hooks, 1994). We can, however, attempt to dis-cover how we have been shaped to read our experiences in particular ways and why we have 'agreed' to such readings. Since particular groups of people share languages and common experiences, some possibility exists that when we share our lived experiences with one another, there will be resonances, echoes that provide points of connection as well as contradictions, points of dissention. (The image of Venn diagrams, the ones that overlap in certain places, are helpful to me here. Though we are not exactly like one another in our subjectivity and the ways we have been shaped, we have experienced certain discourses in common, albeit not exactly in the same ways.) It is precisely the foregrounding and juxtaposition of these simultaneously similar and yet disjunctive readings of experience that is productive for opening possibilities for being&knowing differently.

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In this text, the process of resymbolizing experience and thereby reconceptualizing boundaries is foregrounded. Resymbolization occurs in at least two intertwined dimensions—that of the actual writing of this text and that of the work in the research group. In the work of the group, visual art, spontaneous writing, and conversation provided us with ways of reshaping how we read&wrote our experiences of fear and pain

in teaching. We were 'witnesses' to and responders for one another; we worked in community, shared our thoughts and feelings using various media (see Anderson & Gold, 1998). Two aspects of the group resymbolization process, the artwork and the found poetry from the transcripts, are also integral aspects of the writing-as-resymbolization process. In considering the artwork and the transcripts, I was able to *concentrate,* both in the sense of being present and mindful to these research artifacts as well as in the sense of creating succinct forms of re-presentation. I culled words from the transcripts after repeated interactions with them and re-present them in these pages as found poems.[10] (Please note that found poetry from the transcripts is distinguished from my original poetry as the former is followed by a date in parentheses.) The use of poetry situates me too as poet, and reminds the reader through its very form that, as poet, I too am the poem. I resymbolize what occurred in the group according to my own life and experiences. I cannot do otherwise. There is no one true account of what happened and how it affected each, or any, of us.

The process of writing, and of using a variety of textual approaches and techniques, is then a crucial dimension of how the resymbolization of experience occurs in&through these pages. Writing-as-inquiry can be contextualized within the work of women writers who have used writing as a means of reshaping their being&knowing in the world; through a different relationship to&with words, they have worked for personal and social change (see, for example, in the past twenty-five years, the work of: Cixous, 1981, 1986, 1993; Cixous & Clément, 1986; DuPlessis, 1985; and that of Canadian women writers such as: Brand, 1994a, 1994b; Brandt, 1996; Gunnars, 1989; Marlatt, 1984, 2001; Mouré, 1988; Nourbese Philip, 1994, 1997; G. Scott, 1988; Williamson, 1991). In the area of qualitative inquiry too, writing is acknowledged as a way of breaking out, of becoming critical of the ways that language structures our inquiries. Lather (1991) notes that in a poststructuralist view of research, "the focus is on the development of a mutual, dialogic production of a multi-voice, multi-centered discourse" where "attention shifts away from efforts to represent what is 'really' there and shifts, instead, toward the productivity of language" (p. 112). Richardson (1992, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001) uses poetry and personal narrative to interpret and re-present her research in sociology. Graveline (2000) employs

poetic narrative as a means of exploring aboriginal epistemologies and questioning Eurocentric research practices. L. Neilsen (2001) explores 'scholartistry' (p. 258), the artistic dimensions of writing as an inquiry process (see also, 2002, 1998, pp. 273-283; Neilsen, Cole, & Knowles, 2001). St. Pierre (1997a) notes:

> Writing becomes a site of ethical responsibility that is different from "the empirical concept of writing, which denotes an intelligible system of notations on a material substance" (Spivak, 1974, in St. Pierre). . . . This kind of writing is antihierarchical. . . . And, because it has given up on intentions, it cannot see very far down the road. It stalls, gets stuck, thumbs its nose at order, goes someplace the author did not know existed ahead of time, stumbles over its sense, spins around its middle foregoing ends, wraps idea around idea in some overloaded imbrication that flies out of control into a place of no return. . . . Writing, then, is an exquisitely brazen, ethically astute rhizome that deterritorializes subjects and method. Rhizomatic, nomadic writing, in fact, writes its authors. . . . The author and the text write each other, and that fold in the research process can no longer be ignored in the new ethics of inquiry. (p. 9)

The fragmentary and various text that suggests itself on these pages distinguishes itself from straightforward academic discourse and thereby calls habit-worn ways of being&knowing and related representational practices into question. Irigaray entreats us to imagine *difference;* foundational to her theory is the metaphor of sexual difference (see, for example, Irigaray, 1985a; Whitford, 1991, pp. 53-74). She elucidates the masculine as that which is linear, self-contained and stable in form, and that which is most often publicly valorized—herein represented as traditional academic expository writing. The feminine, often uncritically characterized as the not-masculine, the 'opposite,' is, for Irigaray, that which is as yet unimagined and unsymbolized, dispersed, multi-faceted—an undefined difference—and herein very loosely re-presented through expressive writing, poetry, artwork, and the blank-but-not-empty spaces of the text. Between the masculine and the feminine is the potential for creative intercourse (see Whitford, 1991, p. 58), a liminality that invites us beyond the juxtaposition of the two—a productive and uncertain & space. In attempting to re-present these two and their & space, and also to indicate their changing balances throughout the text, I juxtapose, in varying degrees, traditional academic writing, artwork from our group meetings, my own

poetry, interludes of expressive writing, found poetry from the transcripts of our meetings, and intertextual voices. I also footnote large chunks of theoretical material in an attempt to usurp its place as the mainstay of an academic text. The various theoretical influences elucidated herein operate, then, in a recursive and associational interplay with the artwork, poetry, and expressive writing as part of the resymbolization process, the reconfiguration and re-presentation of being&knowing. On juxtaposition, Ellsworth (1997) writes:

> [The text] offers, then, instead of a hermetically sealed argument, a series of readings of texts and practices set in juxtaposition. Juxtaposition is an aesthetic device in postmodern art and a rhetorical one in postmodern theory and writing. It's an attempt to get viewers and readers to make associations across categorical, discursive, historical, and stylistic boundaries. And juxtapositions get interesting (and political) when they provoke associations that were never intended or sanctioned by the interests that construct and require such boundaries in the first place. . . . This calls for a reading that lets the texts be in fluid and shifting relations to one another and to the reader. Juxtapositioning invites inconsistencies, ambiguities, and ambivalence and foregrounds the fact that there will always be "unspoken themes" that can't or won't be interrogated. (p. 13)

Such a text is unsettling, disrupts usual reading practices. Certainty—in the form of cohesive, linear languaging and a stable, self-conscious author—is problematized. As I write with&through this process, I constantly revise, *see again* differently from another perspective, the ground constantly shifting and moving. The 'I' shifts as well. Often, probably more often than I think, I do not know where I am. I try to highlight this uncertainty through the text itself. Expressive writing, for example, indicated by italics, moves between first and third person. The text interrupts at points too, assumes a voice and speaks—that which 'I' avoid and that which escapes me.

This work is complex. It offers fragments. Partial glimpses. Layers of resymbolization, the reconfiguring of experience as a way of opening spaces, changing perspectives, shifting positions, boundaries. Through processing this text, I hope to problematize, mainly in feminist terms, the experiences of a group of female teachers. To raise questions without coming to any conclusions. I begin with fear and pain as potentially

transformational moments, times that are already unsettling. As with any re-presentation, it will necessarily have its blind spots, be incomplete. I invite you, as reader to engage with this text episodically, associationally, playfully—and trust that you are willing to resymbolize your own experiences in&around&with these words and spaces. That you are willing to be unsettled too in the process, and that you do not seek closure, clear answers. That you will derive your own insights, questions—and that you are indeed courageous.

ii.

of two

Inanna haunts me
going to the depths and
being stripped of her clothes
crossing the river and what else?
leaving behind the earth
moving in darkness
crucifixion terror
something about seven
I don't trust my memory
want to go look up some facts
Descent to the Goddess by Sylvia Brinton
Perera (1981) Inner City Books: Toronto Canada
or maybe *The Inanna Poems* by Karen Lawrence
Longspoon Press (1980)
find a book safety or maybe call Leslie because she has
researched Inanna's myth thoroughly used it in
her doctoral dissertation and I don't *know*

Inanna speaks to
me in my dreams which aren't even in
images anymore her voice
listen to me you are just
protecting yourself let
go she says and I am fighting
eyes closed fingers stuck in ears and
I don't want to go let go
stand naked looking into the eyes of
my sister my self

> The goddess Inanna (her Semitic name is Ishtar) provides a many-faceted symbolic image, a wholeness pattern, of the feminine beyond the merely maternal. . . She [rules] the borderlands, ushering in or out her brother the sun god and her father the moon god. She represents the liminal or intermediate regions, the energies that cannot be contained or made certain and secure. She is not the feminine as night, but rather she symbolizes the consciousness of transition and borders, places of intersection and crossing over that imply creativity and change and all the joys and doubts that go with human consciousness that's flexible, playful, never certain for long. (Perera, 1981, p. 16)

she is the borderlands the liminal
the intermediate regions energies that cannot
be contained or made certain secure she is
transition borders places of intersection and
crossing over that imply creativity change
flexible playful never certain for long
(the feminine beyond the merely maternal)
(from Perera, 1981, p. 16)

***

Luce Irigaray's work provides a model for reconceptualizing being&knowing in the world—an ethical project for our times (Irigaray, 1993b, pp. 116-117; 2002, p. 127; Pheng Cheah & Grosz, 1998, p. 4). She calls for recognition of *two* instead of one, the acknowledgement of *otherness* as a basis for recasting relationships between one another, and between humans and the cosmos (see, for example, Irigaray, 1996, pp. 45-48). Irigaray questions the phallogocentric basis of Western philosophy where "the violent logic of the one" is inscribed, "a Platonic monologic that reduces the other to a pale copy or deficient version of the same" (Pheng Cheah & Grosz, 1998, p. 6). She calls for a time when female subjectivity is recognized as *difference*, not simply as the devalued term in the male/female binary opposition, where difference is simply a question of what is foregrounded. Her work thus challenges us to move beyond dualistic or oppositional being&knowing.[1] Grosz (1994a) elaborates:

> [The] sameness that is proliferated everywhere and on everyone is the sameness of phallic identity. Within this logic, women are reduced to the position of a mere semblance of difference. Difference is reduced to a form of *distinction* or opposition. Oppositions always presuppose the same key term: A and not-A. (p. 342)

Irigaray's theory rests on the acknowledgement of sexual difference as "the most universal and irreducible difference" (2002, p. 98), a difference not recognized in the classical philosophies and knowledge productions of the Western world. She sees sexual difference as the basis on which to accept differences of all sorts, the limit to sameness

(see Schwab, 1998, pp. 78-79). The acknowledgement of sexual difference precipitates the acknowledgement of other differences, requires other ways of being-in-relation-to.

I am sitting at a campfire with three men they talk discuss sweatlodges fasts and their experiences of not eating not even drinking water how good the raindrops on leaves look how they enter altered states how their urine gets concentrated almost orange they ask me what I am writing about and I try to explain Irigaray and her theory of sexual difference some time passes we look at the fire the flames listen to the birds the wind its insistence the sound of leaves moving against each other the evening air gets colder I shiver think about leaving then one asks how this theory is different from the complementarity expressed in shamanism how male and female energy are seen as distinct different how each has its place and I say I have been wondering that in relation to the yin and yang energy in traditional Chinese medicine and another says that some First Nations teachings speak of male energy as fire and female energy as water he asks where in the world are these energies in balance and I think to myself no place that I know of especially not in my own body

For Irigaray, differently sexed bodies provide fertile ground for inscribing two, a rich metaphorical[2] opportunity. Her use of the body is strategic, not literal; the female body represents a way of being&knowing that is marginalized in our culture (see, for example, Whitford, 1991, pp. 57, 70-71, 170-174; 1994b, p. 18; Gallop, 1988, pp. 92-99; Fuss, 1989, pp. 61-66). The 'two lips' of the female body speak difference, a way of being&knowing that is in constant contact with itself, always touching, inseparable, a continuity that resists a clearly distinguishable inside&outside, an & space beyond opposites, a different way of being-in-relation-to (see Irigaray, 1985a; 1985d, pp. 227-240; Whitford, 1991, pp. 169-191).

> Could this be the dawning of a new world? Immanence and transcendence are being recast, notably by that *threshold* which has never been examined in itself: the female sex. It is a threshold unto *mucosity*. Beyond the classic opposites of love and hate, liquid and ice lies this perpetually *half-open* threshold, consisting of *lips* that are strangers to dichotomy. Pressed against one another, but without any possibility of suture, at least of a real kind, they do not absorb the world either into themselves or through themselves, provided they are not abused and reduced to a mere consummating or consuming structure. Instead their shape welcomes without assimilating or reducing or devouring. A sort of door unto voluptuousness, then? Not that, either: their useful function is to designate *a place*, the very place of uselessness. (1994b, p. 175)

Largely because of her insistence on returning always to the sexed body as a basis for her discussion of difference, Irigaray's work has at times been categorized and critiqued as 'essentialist' (see Chanter, 1995; Fuss, 1989, pp. 55-72; Grosz, 1994b; Schor, 1994; Schor & Weed, 1994; Schwab, 1998, pp. 79-80; Weedon, 1997, pp. 60-63; Whitford, 1991, pp. 10-25; 1994b). Essentialist positions are often set in opposition to poststructural positions in feminist debate. How does the 'self' come to be? Through the biological determination of sexed bodies? Through social discourses such as language? Both&and? Chanter (1995) notes that charges of biological essentialism are especially serious in feminist theory because such reductionism leads to preservation of the status quo—and social change is the most important aspect of feminism as a project (p. 4). She argues, however, that while Irigaray does base her discussion in sexual difference, she attempts to go beyond this and to rethink the (historical/philosophical) structures on which such debates center.

> The dichotomies that are associated with the distinction between sex and gender include biology versus society, and nature versus culture. Supported by these tenuous oppositions, the essentialism/anti-essentialism distinction itself is in need of demystification. If we are to understand the issues Irigaray raises, we need first to clean the various lenses through which her various readers view her. (pp. 6-7)

We are called to interrogate more carefully the assumptions underlying the debate itself as we work to acknowledge difference, another way of being&knowing. For Irigaray, the mind/body, spirit/nature separation is challenged through sexual difference, being-two. She finds that we must return to nature, for in nature the importance of *two* is obvious—as in the generativity of life (1996, pp. 35-37).[3] Sexual difference—and air—are vital elements (p. 37). Nature sets the limits—there is no *one* nature, no wholeness in and of itself. She reconceptualizes Hegel's 'negative'—a process of understanding something through its opposite, a conscious 'thinking' process—essentially "the mastery of consciousness (historically male), over nature and human kind" (1996, p. 13)—and says, instead, that the negative exists in nature as limits (see Irigaray, 1996, pp. 12-13; 2002, pp. 98-100; Schwab, 1998, pp. 79-85).

> If man does not take account of the limit inscribed in nature, his opposition to the natural does not accomplish the labor of the negative. It appropriates the natural and claims to overcome it by a consciousness subsequently determined by that natural naïveté: I am the whole. (1996, pp. 35-36)

We must accept our limits, our inevitable incompleteness. Each of the two is only one part. As such, each must realize a different relation to the other. Her new vision of the negative is expressed as "the step back, listening and silence, the necessary alternation of doing and letting be, toward self and other, in relation to a different subject" (2002, p. x). Acceptance of one's limits underscores a move for a radically different way of being&knowing—one outside of classical philosophy and Western epistemological traditions. Irigaray questions too our ability to really *think* outside these traditions: "we argue and debate within a field and with logical and grammatical tools defined in such a way that we cannot really think. The horizon of understanding we have debars us from that thought" (1996, p. 36; see also 2002, p. 126).

traditions of yoga cultures where the
body is cultivated to become more
spiritual and more carnal at the same
time a range of movements nutritional
practices attentiveness to the breath
respect for the rhythms of day and night
seasons and years as calendars of the
flesh the training of the senses for
rewarding concentrated perception all
these gradually bring the body to rebirth
carnally and spiritually at each moment
of every day the body is one I
give back to myself
(from Irigaray, 1996, pp. 23-24)

I have not been able to write have stared for days at the computer screen I have been consumed instead by my physical body the hard rapid beating of my heart my inability to be still my desire to smoke eat sugar have sex I see plainly how I use these things and others to ease pain and fear why can I not use the physical practices of yoga I have learned? the asanas and the breathing I lose myself in anger today I have seen clearly the process through which I try to remake another into my own image of him the process by which I try to force him into my mold do not respect his being do not listen underneath it all is an intense fear and insecurity terror of being swallowed up

only through the body through the
pulling of flesh can the human soul
be transformed and for images words
stories to have this transformative
power they must arise from the
human body flesh and bone and from
the earth's body stone sky liquid soil
this work these images piercing
tongue or ear lobes with cactus
needles are my offerings my
Aztecan sacrifices
(Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 97)

We are called to acknowledge another relation to spirit and nature, one not based on separation but on the acknowledgement of *spaces between,* a space that must be at once 'horizontal and vertical, terrestrial and celestial" (1994b, p. 174). Irigaray writes of several intermediary ideas, images to describe the *spaces between* two—among these *wonder, angels,* and *mucous. Wonder,* that sees something as though always for the first time, and never seizes the other as its object" (1994b, p. 172). *Angels,* that move between heaven and earth, that cannot be reduced in language, that represent another "incarnation of the body" (1994b, p. 174). *Mucous,* that refuses transcendence, that is situated in the body, that is slippery, felt (see Irigaray, 1993a, pp. 109-111; Whitford, 1991, pp. 162-165; 1994a, p. 158).[4] Each of these represent, in different ways, the *spaces between* two—what "has been split by patriarchy—the flesh and the spirit, nature and gods, the carnal and the divine" where "women have been allocated body, flesh, nature, earth, and carnality while men have been allocated spirit and transcendence" (Whitford, 1994a, p. 158).[5]

(she is the borderlands the liminal
the intermediate regions energies that cannot
be contained or made certain secure she is
transition borders places of intersection and
crossing over that imply creativity change
flexible playful never certain for long
the feminine beyond the merely maternal)
(from Perera, 1981, p. 16)

> The division of tasks between home and the public realm could not be sustained without depriving woman of a relationship to the . . . singularity necessary for her relationship to the universal. . . . Without a cultural identity suited to the natural identity of each sex, nature and the universal are parted, like heaven and earth. . . . This division of tasks between heaven and earth, suffering and labor here below, recompense and felicity in the beyond . . . is actually foreign to that of other cultures in which the body is spiritualized as body and the earth as earth, the celestial being the manifestation of our degree of spirituality here and now. (Irigaray, 1996, pp. 23-24)

Irigaray looks to Eastern traditions in her process of conceptualizing *two* and the necessity of creating links between them—specifically to India and the practice of yoga (1996, 2002; see also, Blakey, 2000; Sammartino, 2000). She elaborates on the idea of 'air' as one of the vital elements of life—and points to the conscious and autonomous mediation of the breath, its movement through the *chakras* of the body, from the genitals, up through the abdomen, the heart and throat, to the forehead (third eye) and the top of the head—a movement of energy, air (*spirit*, breath) from the carnal to the more spiritual, accomplished through the body. This movement provides not only a metaphor for linking nature and spirit—but also a material practice for doing so. As such, it provides a gesture, an act that helps to break down what has previously been separate. The divine and the body are cultivated at once through conscious attention to the breath (1996, pp. 23-25; 2002, pp. 60-64). Irigaray juxtaposes cultures where speech is foregrounded, where adherence to an abstract technology, language, renders one inattentive to the breath, the body—with those that attend to the breath and silence, a space where listening—and the silent recognition of something other than the *one*—can be perceived (see 1996, pp.115-119, 121-128; 2002, pp. 50-55).

she reminds me that in the
Cree tradition silence and pause
is a part of talk contemplative
moments where one listens within
between and how Cree
people sometimes have
a hard time conversing in white
circumstances because there is no
time no space to
listen speech intervenes

The reconception of bodymindspirit as inextricably linked necessitates a reconception too of immanence and transcendence as related to the divine. Irigaray insists on the importance of *life;* she relates immanence, a respect for the spirit, the divine in all things, to a respect for life, its transformative potential.[6] Death is, at least, partly, a spiritual death that originates in the belief in a universal *one*—the denial of woman. Death, therefore, must also be reconstituted within her own horizons (see 1996, pp. 23-26). A relationship with death on her own terms is linked to a need for her own connection to the divine.

> What is spirit if not the means for matter to emerge and endure in its proper form, its proper forms? What is spirit if it forces the body to comply with an abstract model that is unsuited to it? The spirit is already dead. . . . The capitalization of the living by a male culture which, in giving itself death as its horizon, oppresses the female. (1996, p. 25)

Ruether (1983) also explores the body/spirit split, the transcendence of spirit and the renunciation of the body in the area of feminist theology. She writes about eschatology in classical theology—the notion that death is a movement to a redemptive and egalitarian 'afterlife,' that which makes all suffering and injustice in this life bearable—and the implications of such thinking for feminists.

> The eschatological thought that developed in classical Christianity is characterized by extreme ambiguity toward women and what they represent (for males). Female sexuality and giving birth are seen as the antithesis of the escape from the mortal life that the reborn virginal Christian seeks. Femaleness is both symbol and expression of the corruptible bodiliness that one must flee in order to purify the soul for eternal life. Female life processes—pregnancy, birth, suckling, indeed, female flesh as such—become vile and impure and carry with them the taint of decay and death. (Ruether, 1983, p. 245)

Ruether, too, valorizes life in the here and now; her vision includes "roots in nature and involve[s] acceptance of finitude, human scale, and balanced relationships between persons and between human and non-human beings" (p. 254). New life, a life revisioned, a more ethical turn—what Irigaray also envisions—life, not death as a horizon. A move

towards recognition of immanence, spirit in&through nature, a reunion of bodymindspirit, a move away from the classical transcendence that reiterates division.

> we've been taught that the spirit is
> outside our bodies or above our heads somewhere
> up in the sky with God we're supposed to forget
> that every cell in our bodies every bone
> and bird and worm
> has spirit in it
> (from Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 58)

I am sitting at a campfire with three men they talk discuss sweatlodges fasts and their experiences of not eating not even drinking water how good the raindrops on leaves look how they enter altered states how their urine gets concentrated almost orange they ask me what I am writing about and I try to explain Irigaray and her theory of sexual difference some time passes we look at the fire the flames listen to the birds the wind its insistence the sound of leaves moving against each other the evening air gets colder I shiver think about leaving then one asks how this theory is different from the complementarity expressed in shamanism how male and female energy are seen as distinct different how each has its place and I say I have been wondering that in relation to the yin and yang energy in traditional Chinese medicine and another says that some First Nations teachings speak of male energy as fire and female energy as water he asks where in the world are these energies in balance and I think to myself no place that I know of especially not in my own body

The spiral image on this page has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

breathing

hands cupped right over left in a circle around and just below her navel she breathes in holds breathes out again breathes in holds breathes out again breathes in (there is a cat in the temple and she is allergic to cats) holds breathes out again breathes in holds (feels a little dizzy) breathes out again breathes in holds (the man across the circle is breathing too loudly didn't the leader say to breathe naturally without effort? the sound is annoying why doesn't he do it right?) breathes out again on and on an overpowering sense of nausea clutches her will the leader never ring the bell to stop the practice? she has to get up and walk around feels like she might have to run to the bathroom while the others sit in the circle breathing breathing[1]

Klein (1995, 1997; see also Tomm, 1995) explores subjectivity through acknowledging alternative relationships among bodymindspirit than those made possible in strictly Western conceptions of being&knowing. She outlines the essentialist-poststructural debate in feminism and notes that the opposition set up in this debate is one that, in itself, replicates the body (essentialist)-mind (poststructural) split so often critiqued by Western feminists. Essentialists attempt to distinguish what is unique to woman and claim the right to define it. In so doing, they offer coherence, a centralizing impetus that transcends the particularities of context. Feminist poststructuralists argue, however, that subjectivity is constructed through discourse, that competing discourses are at work creating a multi-faceted, often conflicting and always unfinished site. The self is called into question. Language, as discourse, is crucial. Klein engages her understanding of Buddhist traditions to help find an acceptance of both positions, a movement between and beyond the two, an & space. In this sense, her work is similar to Irigaray's. She goes beyond the debate itself and attempts to reconceptualize subjectivity as not just the content of "mind," but the realization of subjective *states* such as mindfulness (1995, pp. 10-11).

> Buddhist notions of subjectivity and techniques for cultivating certain subjective states provide a new way of looking at the tensions of the essentialist-postmodern debate. Unlike either essentialist or postmodern feminist reflections, Buddhist traditions value each of the supposedly opposed categories of constructed and nonconstructed, or what they refer to as the conditioned and unconditioned. Buddhist traditions are therefore particularly interested in describing and cultivating a subject that participates in both conditioned and unconditioned categories. (1995, pp. 10-11)

Mindfulness as subjective state, a different way of being&knowing for those of us in the Western world, is characterized by a depth and breadth not found in what Klein refers to as the two dimensionality, the flatness of an essential or poststructural subjectivity (1995, pp. 84-85). It is coherence amidst chaos, a calm centeredness and stillness of bodymindspirit, a connectedness beyond the self and the limits of the individual body through nonjudgmental observation. A reframing of *mind.* Mindfulness is described by Klein (1995) as " the ability to sustain a calm, intense, and steady focus when one chooses to do so" (p. 11), by Tomm (1995) as "increased attention to what is happening at any moment" (p. 15), and by Kabat-Zinn (1994) as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (p. 4) (see also Bai, 2001; Thich Nhat Hanh, 1995a, 1995b). It is not necessarily the absence of conceptual thought as much as the non-attached acceptance of what is—the practice of watching the mind without involving oneself in its drama, or in its associated emotions. It is an anchoring in the body—a heightened and purposeful awareness of physical sensations, often with a focus on the breath.

perfect calm
being with
relaxing into
being present

like when we pick sweetgrass
on a warm August day talking picking
looking for purple roots not talking
inhaling the scent noticing
the smell in the air on our fingers
wind blows sun hot
bees mosquitoes flies zzzz
blue sky dark
clouds gather to the west
and we are I am here

she is having difficulty writing about mindfulness today yesterday it is hard to write about something so escapable nebulous hard to describe and maybe that's it staying with something going into it softening breathing into it opening into a space that is so often covered over with clutter chatter the play of the mind she takes off her sock and picks at her toe nail polish the rhinestone that the esthetician put there when she had a pedicure

thinks about eating chocolate and the pain in her upper back the tension she gets when she sits at the computer she picks up books marks pages writes on bits of paper lists characteristics of mindfulness makes a mess of her office floor admonishes herself for not being disciplined wonders what people will say about the lack of work she is doing not doing realizes she has a headache realizes that she needs to write about this aspect of mindfulness go into it accept the process stay with it stop judging (there is an in-between an & space of being&knowing that is neither there nor there but here)

Reclaiming the body. Going to the body, waking up to a different way of being&knowing. Some time ago, I wrote a poetry manuscript that included many references to my body, various parts of it. I asked Di Brandt, then writer-in-residence in the English Department at the University of Alberta, to comment on my work. She asked why the body references were stripped of possessive pronouns—eyes, hands, wrists instead of my eyes, my hands, my wrists. Disconnectedness. Disembodiment. Claiming my body, if only in language, felt strangely unsafe.

she has been writing in a space of physical fragility for days neck and upper back frozen she leaves the computer and lies in bed unable to move then spends two hours in physio returns to write the next day wrists and elbows shoot pain arms immobile unable to even turn on a tap what is it she does not want to say?

memories remembering
members of the self
voices images dismembered
like the woman from Fort McMurray
a single mother found
dismembered strewn in
trees and melting
snow ripped apart

from the outside she is
together arms and legs
attached she can smile
nod go to work
function while inside a
chaos of memories churn churn
some of it not quite reaching
the surface she searches for
pieces that fit bits to
throw away doesn't search
too deep the ashes

What can be meant by the 'body'? Is it simply what I see when I look in the mirror? A physical form that serves as a vehicle for mindspirit, the intangible aspects of 'me'? Am 'I' an integrated bodymindspirit, different aspects like the aspects of the moon, each highlighted at different times but always all one—and part of a larger system? Do 'I' recreate, reform my bodymindspirit both creatively and responsively as 'I' interact with the world? For Abram (1996), the body is our presence in the world, the physical manifestation of our relationships and interactions with nature and with other people. The body is indeed "the true subject of experience" (p. 45). It is preconceptual, a means of sensing, interacting with the world, a body "underneath the anatomized and mechanical body that we have learned to conceive, prior . . . to all our conceptions" (p. 46). Such a phenomenological view turns the Cartesian mind/body split on its head through foregrounding the body. To some degree, however, a split is still evident; a sensing body pre-exists conceptual 'mind.' A feminist poststructuralist view, though, sees the body, like mind, like thought, as always written, never outside of language and other forms of discourse—and always a sexed body (see, for example, Grosz, 1995, pp. 83-101, 104; Weedon, 1997, pp. 114-127). Body and mind are both inscribed in structures that we, as written subjects, must work to deconstruct, an always unfinished project. In a radically different move, Klein (1995) discusses the inextricability of bodymindspirit in Buddhism, how each aspect continuously informs and responds to the others. She illustrates the intertwining of all through the example of "the subtle consciousness that departs the body at death . . . [and that rides] on a very subtle physical form known as *rlung* . . . in Tibetan, *prana* in Sanskrit, and *ch'i* in Chinese and [that is] variously translated as wind, air, subtle breath, or energy" (p. 71). The concept of 'body' as strictly material is called into question. For Klein, the practice of mindfulness provides access to a multidimensional realm of being&knowing through attention to 'body.' The physical act of breathing is at once material and metaphorical, a grounded connection to nature, the environment, through a life-sustaining exchange of gases, an extension of the boundaries of the 'self' as separate embodied being (see Klein, 1997). (I assume here an & position among these perspectives—an always sexed 'body'

interwoven with aspects of mindspirit, grounded in sensous perception, and at once written and able to write as it interacts, exchanges with the world.)

in a yoga class practising the warrior pose the teacher tells her to move her foot out further or she'll get the wooden spoon shoulder and back muscles tense breathing stops she is angry scornful afraid thoughts jumble together she thinks this teacher doesn't understand yoga has a warped idea of herself in relation to the students and memories intervene years of dancing lessons with the yardstick close by you could be smacked if you did not turn your knees out turn your feet out hold your arms correctly squeeze your bum together because in highland dancing your movements are either right or they are wrong there is no in-between

No in-between. A way of being and knowing marked by standards that must be attained, an external focus, future orientation, disconnection from, distrust of the self, alienation from the body (through the body). The teleological orientation that underlines much of Western epistemology&ontology emanates from the belief that pure knowledge is separate from us as experiencing subjects. An ideal to be attained. Truth and knowledge are transcendent, not immanent, divided from us and our perceptual powers as embodied beings. Klein (1995) warns that the 'idolatry of ideals' is "problematic from a Buddhist perspective when it pulls one out of the present . . . and from a feminist perspective when it overlooks women's genuine needs and circumstances, demeans her present self, or exacerbates any tendency toward self-hatred" (p. 77). She further notes that:

> Mindfulness departs from the urge to master, override, rein in, or otherwise manipulate the self. It avoids treating the self as a territory to be conquered, governed, colonized by ideals. Insofar as the relationship to oneself sets the tone for one's relationship to others, it is crucial to have models of self-engagement that do not denigrate or otherwise oppress. (p. 80)

we build this illusion of who we
are this bigger than life illusion and we
sit inside and we *are* just us and we
have this smokescreen around us and it
looks and it sounds really great but inside we're
still just us and for me I think that that's a big
part of fear if I can build that smokescreen up and
it can look really good from the outside but I'm still

sitting inside going "I'm me, I'm me" that's where that fragile ego sits a state of anxiety all the time because somebody's going to see through this smokescreen all the right talk all the right things at the right place and you're still you we live in a world that wants these humongous smokescreens around us and I think we're creating this constant level of anxiety that none of us can really live up to without having major cracks
(January 27, p. 11)

The found poetry (October 28, p. 10) and the maze image have been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

she is in the temple again and during the first breathing practice she feels as if she is suffocating like the air is cut off every time she inhales she stays with it breathes in to the center of her chest holds breathes in again down to a place just below her navel holds breathes out on and on on and on the ringing of the bell comes surprisingly soon a gentle reminder to come back to the room somewhere along the way the feeling of suffocation dissipated where did it go?

The practice of mindfulness moves us into a different relation of bodymindspirit. Through foregrounding breathing, and returning at all times to the sensing body, the impermanence of thought becomes evident. What seems gripping in the moment passes with the breath. A multidimensional space opens around experience, how we encase it in language. We notice how the mind works, its habits, its familiar haunts and pathways. We observe, witness. Zukav & Francis (2001), in their discussion of emotional awareness, provide the useful image of standing on a bridge, noticing the river beneath with care and attention, accepting where and how it flows through and away (pp. 108-109, 276-278). We practise awareness of our thoughts, our feelings, and if we fall into the flow of the river, we get back onto the bridge, again and again.

we need to help kids learn how to step
outside of what they're taking for granted
jiggle thinking teach different things
like drama and art different ways of expressing
inviting kids to go back inside themselves
just ask themselves what their feelings are
try to understand become caught in
the center so that you watch
witness yourself witness what's
really happening what am I really doing?
what am I really feeling? accepting flowing
witness what's happening and to
do that in a class that's
important because you're getting
the information you're looking at
what you're doing how you're processing
(January 27, p. 15)

my body reacts before I
know why the older I get my body goes
stop deal with this won't even allow me

to think of other things which
is good I'm glad I'm glad
(November 16, pp. 9-10)

the text interrupts asks whether it might be more difficult for a woman to remain in her body to ground herself there why would she want to? (a body so variously written upon so despised at times so out of control) more difficult for her too to take responsibility for herself not feel like a victim?

The constancy of choosing to return to the body, of observing thought, mind through a practice of some sort is a crucial aspect of mindfulness. This provides what Klein (1995) calls 'visceral coherence'—a way of being&knowing different from the 'narrative coherence' problematized by poststructuralism and its view of the subject (pp. 11, 70-71). Stanley (1994) questions feminist rejections of the narrative impulse in women's autobiographical writing, noting that "the writing of a narrative of a life [is] a means—one means—of constructing coherence and identity for self" (p. 135). The narrative impulse, for Stanley, then, is a way of making sense of the fragmentation that characterizes many women's lives. For both Stanley and Klein, the desire for some form of 'coherence' is evident. (I accept both the desire for some form of coherence as an integral aspect of human existence, a way of making sense of experience and the feminist poststructuralist view of the subject as constructed. I keep Klein's term, 'visceral coherence,' close too as a reminder to return always to the body, to return to sensuous being&knowing, to not be afraid of the intensity of the gut, the lessons therein. Visceral coherence is also a reminder that the body is always changing, that 'coherence' is awareness of, a being-witness-to, change. Constancy grounded in the flux of the body.)

surrounded by friends
in the labyrinth of dreams
I am aware that I
must do something
(I can't remember what)
no one is surprised

Deborah takes me to the bathroom
makes me look in the mirror
face burned beyond recognition
skin stretched nose smeared into lips

flesh covering parts of eyes
I am terrified but can't stop
looking at my self in the mirror
why didn't you tell me I ask
it happens to all of us she replies
I splash with cool clear water
face returns to normal

surfacing then sobbing from someplace
deep within tears dissolving the glue that
holds me together

today she is breathing and the right side of her body seems to have fallen away where did it go? she keeps breathing is aware of the shadow the absence maybe keeps breathing

(someone tells her that the right side of the body represents the feminine in Chinese medicine yin energy why does the right side drop away?)

> The body has a pulse all of its own and continues to articulate much of what is going on within us. Our task is to find ways to be attentive to its voice, listen to its bold proclamations as well as its more subtle forms of distress. . . . Too often we are encouraged to push against the pain to the point we can dismiss the body's voice when it is really crying out for attention. (Snowber, 1999, p. 18)

Mindfulness carries an aspect of choice, of self-responsibility, of agency. In Klein's (1995) framing of 'mindfulness,' " the ability to sustain a calm, intense, and steady focus when one chooses to do so" (p. 11) and also in Kabat-Zinn's (1994), "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (p. 4)—purposeful action and choice are evident. The choice to return to the body, to practice breathing and pay attention to the body, to embrace the discipline of observing thought, of changing perspective, placing thought in a different relation to bodyspirit. The choice to move out of habit-formed ways of being&knowing in the world. To transform relations within and among.

> We do not really take charge of our life, of our respiration, of the air. . . . In the East, it is more common to remember that living is equivalent to breathing. And the Sages there care about acquiring a proper life through practicing a conscious breathing. This breathing brings them little by little to a second birth, a birth assumed by oneself, willed by oneself and not

> only by our parents and a physiology that dictates it laws to us. Breathing in a conscious and free manner is equivalent to taking charge of one's life, to accepting solitude through cutting the umbilical cord, to respecting and cultivating life, for oneself and for others. (Irigaray, 2002, pp. 73-74)

in a different yoga class with a different teacher she is lying on her back arms stretched overhead left heel resting on top of right toe left hip raised to the ceiling abdomen facing the right head turned to the left crocodile pose spinal twist she can feel herself falling over doesn't know where to put her head wants to roll over rest wait for the others to finish and the teacher ever watchful says breathe into it observe where your body is what's happening soften into it and she can feel her neck her upper back so tight she breathes breathes relaxes and breathing into the tension acknowledging it makes it somehow bearable

(can she choose to be in her body? be responsible for her breath?)

I would like to simplify my
life part of this is the whirlwind
I've been on the blue blue
and yellow the northern lights
looking for the opportunity to just
kind of stop and enjoy appreciate
what's around me versus what I've
been doing a lot of the time
(July 22, p. 3)

the lens that you're looking
through is the way that you're seeing
things letting go of our perceived
ways of looking what we
expect letting go
(January 27, p. 9)

The ear/messiness image and the found poetry (November 16, p. 12) have been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

> The expectation I bring to each moment may need to be shattered, even arrested, in order for me to hear a new song. . . . I am invited into [the] mystery of being physically present. It is not a place I can contrive, but a space to be opened up to, a place to sit in with open hands and bare feet. (Snowber, 1999, p. 23)

The practice of mindfulness inspires relationships where we can feel our connections to the complex living systems of the world—where a felt sense of this relationship is realized through bodymindspirit—and does not exist only in language, in conceptual thinking, our limited intellectual inventions—though we acknowledge through our attention how we are shaped and affected by these. Bai (2001) insists that mindfulness, through 'non-conceptual awareness' (p. 91) offers us a different relationship to that which we, in the Western world, often consider outside ourselves, a way of *seeing with*

sensory perceptiveness—instead of *looking at* which implies a split subject/object relation. Abram (1996) concurs:

> To define another being as an inert or passive object is to deny its ability to actively engage us and to provoke our senses; *we thus block our perceptual reciprocity with that being.* By linguistically defining the surrounding word as a set of determinate objects, we cut our conscious, speaking selves off from the spontaneous life of our sensing bodies. (p. 56)

A different way of being&knowing then. Not one which folds the other into itself only through language and thought, but one which sees the 'self,' listens to the 'self' in a more awake kind of way and can therefore see and listen to the other differently. Seeing, listening with&in bodymindspirit.

(Can we re-present, resymbolize this, in some aspects at least, with&in language?)

iii.

kiva[1]

imagine kiva a sacred space underground
round a descent down place of prayer of
going to the underworld the void some say the
womb from which to emerge reborn our
kiva in the education building a place for a
group of women teacher co-researchers to
meet once a month over the course of a year we
begin with community building our work the
exploration of experiences of fear and pain in
teaching Haug (1987) serves as guide we
write simultaneously of an experience or image
related to a reading or our brainstorming one
volunteers to share her writing the others respond
through creative writing painting drawing
sculpture movement each speaks to her response
as a way of opening discussion another shares her
writing and so on

I have no idea why I'm here
I don't know what I can contribute
I'm really curious about how it's going to evolve
and I guess there is a personal interest in seeing
what tools people choose to express themselves what
works for them how you go about bringing this to some form
it'll give me a chance to see how different tools are utilized so
that I can use them in my work

I'm here first and foremost initially because I knew that I'd
get to see Ellis on a more regular basis
I was going through quite a tumultuous time as to whether or
not I was in the right spot in the right place doing the right thing
and wasn't sure where I was going thought that this might
help still believe that would also like to look
back on where I've come from see
what I've learned along the way

I spend most of the time my family time with
men have two boys a husband even our dog is male
my professional side is dealing with men most of the time too
so I was looking forward to meeting a group of women who
have careers and are active engaged in life doing things
I love hearing about other women who have special talents and interests
and do wonderful things like fly off to shop
being part of a research project would certainly give me experience
and I think it is a way of finding out more about myself
a different way of sharing what happens in my life

why did I say yes?
because I'm a new teacher
how do I address the fact that I want to keep my job
I don't want to be too outspoken because I'm trying to
fit trying to do a good job
it's selfish in a way that I'm looking for help
and I'm looking for ideas
and I'm looking for support

and the circle
I miss that aspect of university
because the classroom was my circle
I had a close group of friends and we all had to
juggle family and school and lots of different things
I'm still trying to fit in
I'm the age of all the teachers who are seasoned teachers but
I'm the rookie and sometimes those don't quite fit together

so coming here and sharing maybe writing and expressing and putting
things down I don't think you ever finish a puzzle but

I like fun
it was a good excuse to see my sister and to go out for a nice dinner
you have these fears and concerns and
thoughts about teaching which are never expressed
and I don't express things well or very openly so it'll be interesting

I think I'm just in a year of saying yes because
I never got to for so many years you put a lot of things
on hold when you're teaching it's such a consuming life

the why questions are always the hardest
(June 27, pp. 10-13)

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Nine women, including me, gathered once a month for a year to explore experiences of fear and pain in teaching through writing and various other artistic media.[2] Our purpose was to work together in exploring our stories, to rewrite them in different ways, resymbolize them—and thus to trouble our experiences, see the ways that we have been shaped to read them, even to problematize what we considered 'fear' and 'pain.' What were our blind spots, personally and collectively? Could we move beyond our habit-formed ways of being&knowing in the world through a group process that included language and other media? Were there themes, patterns that could help us rewrite our teaching practices—and what would that tell us about teacher education?

Zelda*
I graduated with a BA in dance and theatre
and then continued in the dancing profession
for about twenty years in the United States I
teach dance most of my teaching is either in
post secondary or as an artist in residence in
a variety of different situations--could be
anywhere from kindergarten to high school
to schools for priests to handicapped
children

Marie*
I was secondary trained but my first assignment was grade one have been teaching for about twenty years mostly in French immersion taught elementary did some senior high then I worked at the university with student teachers taught in Europe for two years am now an administrator at the senior high level

The actual process we undertook in our group meetings was influenced significantly by the studies of Haug et al (1987) and Arelis (1995).[3] Both of these studies involve collective work, groups of women who explore a theme using their own memories and the responses of the group as research process. Haug et al's work centers on the question of how women's bodies come to be sexualized; Arelis' work, which is based on Haug's, explores women's early reading experiences and their influence on gendered identity. A crucial aspect of Haug's work is that of examining experience and looking for the ways that we are complicit in the shaping of our gendered identities, research as intervention and transformative process (see pp. 34-36). Haug acknowledges the important role of storytelling in women's consciousness-raising groups, but goes beyond its circularity where "we could progress no further" and where "no one wanted to listen any more," to a culling of memory through writing and an ensuing process of questioning, contradiction, and rewriting (p. 39). This aspect of transformation, of coming to see experiences in a different way—is particularly pertinent to our work. In Haug and Arelis' collectives, the women would begin by writing about an important image, describing in detail associated images, memories, feelings, and events that came to mind—all in third person as a means of creating distance. Writings would then be shared, and the others would respond, focusing on 'missing' parts—inconsistencies, questions, silences, clichés. The women would then rework their stories "*against* the interpretations of others" (Haug et al, 1987, p. 57). The work of tracing contradictions and silences, both within a story and among the experiences of the group members, was an important means of moving deeper into rereadings of experience (see pp. 65-69).

Victoria*
started teaching in 1978 taught five and half years took fourteen years off have been teaching for the past year and a half at a high school have two kids one who's in high school with me my hobby is quilting I like to do country sorts of quilts use lots of colors and textures I teach foods and fashion

Lou*
worked for about fifteen years in various situations with emotionally disturbed and Down's syndrome trainable mentally handicapped learning disabled autistic all kinds of children moved into a regular elementary school setting taught five or six years took a jump into junior high was a counsellor for six years did my master's degree and then luckily got seconded to the university went back into junior high and have been teaching full time will be working next as a high school counsellor

One significant aspect of our process was that we wrote *during* the group meetings where, in Haug's and Arelis' studies, writing was done outside of the group, circulated, and then discussed at the meetings. The type of writing that is produced when we consciously craft a piece that we know we will share later with a group is markedly different from the kind of writing that emerges spontaneously in a group setting. Our process was based on the work of Natalie Goldberg (1986, 1990, 1993; see also, Turner-Vesselago, 1995) who describes writing practice as a timed process that proceeds without editing or censoring and during which the arm keeps moving. My experience with the approach of timed 'writing practice' or 'free writes,' both in formal and informal settings, with adults and with adolescents is that it can sometimes surprise, lead to thoughts, feelings, and memories that we don't often consciously think about. For the purposes of this study, exploring and resymbolizing experiences of fear and pain in teaching,

anything that could help us to see these experiences in a different way was helpful. As Roxanne noted the first time we worked through the process, *"It's a tough process, I find. This gets into you."* When we recapped our work before Christmas with a recursive writing—a rereading of what we had written and a timed writing in response—Rebecca encountered a surprise when thoughts emerged for which she was unprepared. In her words, *"I think I was thinking of those things, but I didn't want to let myself think of those things. Just some things about being a child that are painful, that I didn't want to go back to. I could feel them all around me but I was shutting them out. . . . I don't want to go there. You have to have a readiness to revisit some of these things."*

Rebecca*
my undergraduate degree is in Health Sciences got more training in hospital practice was just really scared at the thought of helping somebody who might be sick practised at the hospital worked part-time in community health came back to university to teach accepted a full time position took a leave did a master's degree am now in a doctoral program

Jessica*
got a BFA in drama took a year of education decided that acting wasn't for me taught for about a year and a half taught in an elementary school got pregnant had this wonderful opportunity with a drama troupe spent three years as an actor/teacher did my master's in theatre and education taught junior high went into drama consulting decided to try administration spent 7 years as an assistant principal retired last June

Ellis*
graduated in nursing worked in hospital settings found myself teaching at a college realized that doing

program development was fun liked
molding building completed an adult
education degree what I've been doing
since is process works facilitating
inner process work using bodywork
like yoga and spontaneous painting am
now an artist in residence at
a high school

Another significant aspect of our research process was that we used various media—spontaneous writing, art, and conversation—as methods for moving below the surface of our experiences of fear and pain in teaching. At one point, we even worked together in tableaux—a dramatic form that involves frozen group 'pictures' using the whole body.[4] Our practice was to begin with some form of introductory activity—sometimes brainstorming or listening to a reading—after which we all wrote about a teaching experience associated with fear and pain. One woman would then volunteer to share her writing, and each of us responded in writing, watercolor painting, pastel or crayon drawing, playdough sculpture, or creations constructed from fabric or Lego. A group discussion ensued.[5]

Eisner (1988; 1997; in Saks, 1996, see also, Barone & Eisner, 1997) contends that arts-informed[6] research in education has the potential to expand, even reconceptualize our epistemological beliefs through re-presenting human experiences in forms different from that of numbers or traditional academic discourse, the preferred forms of representation in a scientific/positivistic paradigm. In challenging the latter, he says that "knowledge as process, a temporary state is scary to many" (1997, p. 7), that "knowledge is constructed by being able to see things in fresh ways" (in Saks, 1996, p. 412), and that the arts "provide the reader with access to content that would otherwise be inaccessible" because "some things can only be known by feel, by innuendo, by implication, by mood" (in Saks, 1996, p. 413; see also, 1988). Butler-Kisber (1998, 2000-2001. 2002; Stewart & Butler-Kisber, 1999), Luce-Kapler (1997), and Richardson (1992) have transformed integral aspects of the transcripts from their studies into found poetry while others have created readers theatre scripts, ethnodrama, and novels (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer,

1995; Mienczakowski, 1995; Dunlop, 2001). Indeed, the area of arts-informed research has grown beyond the area of simply representing the results of research through artistic media, where it initially began, to include the use of artistic processes to explore issues and also to interpret the phenomena that surface (see Diamond & Mullen, 1999). Crawford (1997), Bach (1998), and Edgar (1999) for example, have made image integral to the process of their work (see also, the work of the Image & Identity Research Collective, 2002). Hawkins (1988) and Norris (2000) employ drama in various forms. In our work with fear and pain in teaching, artistic media and processes figure prominently throughout various aspects of the inquiry. We used writing as well as visual art to resymbolize our difficult teaching experiences. As well, I employ writing as a means of processing and of re-presenting what happened in the group.

Roxanne*
I'm the rookie at the table have only just
finished my degree in 1998 came to Canada
with my ex-husband had no idea that I
would end up in teaching had always
worked in a bank have three teenage boys at
the moment have found where I'm supposed
to be love what I am doing ended up
teaching English and Social have all sorts in
the classroom learning
disabilities behavior kids

Brighid*
taught mainly junior high and also
some high school English French drama
stayed home with my kids for six or seven
years did my master's degree taught some
courses in this faculty thought I needed to
back out be a 'real' teacher again if I was
going to teach student teachers and so taught
junior high for six years came
back to university

***

Lou tells of a situation in a new position as counsellor at a high school where she had to "appear knowledgeable, but definitely was not," where she was able to "move into a

mode of sounding like she knew what she was talking about and outwardly look calm, cool, and collected whilst inside attempting to stay one step ahead of herself." Rebecca responds by picking up a ball of playdough.

you just have to feel this one
(she distributes the play dough in small balls to all the other women) hold it
very carefully I wasn't sure
what I was going to do until
I picked up this medium and
then I felt it and I thought oh
so I might have warmed it up but
first it felt quite cool quite calm
like that outward image that you thought
you were projecting in your story but then
if you just put a little bit of pressure on it
it just is so fragile just mushes and it was
that mushing kind of oh it gave way with so
little resistance that's how I think I felt
in those kinds of moments just crushable
it was such a neat feeling

it's the give in it that
almost sent a shiver through
me gave in so easily to my pressure

(everyone is working with her piece of playdough at this point)

it's easily crushable but
it's easily reformed that's what
came to my mind
it's easily crushable but
it's easily reformed

and the more pressure
you've got the more
it's solidly formed

the more pressure from
the outside the more expectation
the solid in the center keeps
going because the expectation is it's there

you can really crush it but
pieces don't drop off they stay together

something's got to give and
eventually something breaks on it if you
press it hard enough

it breaks off when it dries out if it's old and
used and done

it needs to be constantly
massaged and cared for

yes

if you didn't use it
it would just be this dried mass
that would crumble

you constantly have to reshape it you
can't be idle with it you can't let it go
you can't forget just keep it the same
(August 24, pp. 12, 14-15)

letting go[1]

I don't know if it's expectations
or beliefs that we have about what
a teacher is and what a teacher does
those assumptions that we have
that we don't really examine the things
we unwittingly buy
into that are make us anxious if we
take them out draw about them
do something with them then maybe
we can let them go
(January 27, p. 20)

Originally, I conceived of my doctoral research as theoretical and creative, an exploration through&with writing. I envisioned juxtaposing autobiographical excerpts about my experiences of fear and pain in teaching with academic explorations in ways that might inform my reading of such experiences. The mythic figure Inanna would guide the process, would interrupt poetically. Somewhere in the midst of writing my proposal, someone asked why I was not talking with other teachers about their experiences of fear and pain in teaching. I was astounded by my own reply. Truly, I did not want others to 'mess up' the theoretical and creative work I was trying to do. I had to reflect on how I have tried to stay separate throughout my life, tried to live as if unaffected by others, even as a member of a family. I realized how my illusion of being separate is just that—an illusion, one of control, perhaps. An illusion underlined by fear of losing my 'self'—of being gobbled up by an 'other.' I wondered about the many ways I have worked to keep my illusion intact and reflected on how everything I was reading pointed to community and interconnectedness. Here was another opportunity to face fear. Involve others in my study. Let go of my tightly held plans, my thinking, open up to 'being affected.' See what would emerge.

the text notes that she can't stop reading her experiences as personal shortcomings of some sort flaws that she thinks she can overcome through awareness fix up paste over (doesn't look outside herself)

we walk along the shore of the ocean I
talk about my research how each of the
women had a theme that she returned to
and someone I have just met asks me
what my theme was letting
go I say

hanging on not letting go
let go (hanging on)

I believed that letting go would be easy. I was prepared, after all. Have learned to trust process. Have learned many lessons through writing and through dance. In almost twenty years of choreographing plays both in community theatre and with high school students, I have moved—from arriving on stage with preset pieces that I teach to the performers—to arriving on stage with few ideas and little sense of the music. Instead of teaching my own plan, I have learned how to let go and co-create with others, an interplay, a negotiation where we all see what we need to do and listen to others, a rewarding and somewhat magical process (see Walsh, 1999). Writing, too, has taught me much. In writing my master's thesis (1990) and a difficult poetry manuscript, I learned to rest with my words, to stay with them and to trust that they would show me where they wanted to go. To let go of where I thought I was going, be willing to go somewhere else. In writing a collaborative piece too, I was forced to acknowledge how protective I was of my words, how close I wanted to hold them, how little I wanted anyone else to change them, move them, delete them even—and also how uncomfortable I was in working with someone else's words (see Luce-Kapler & Walsh, 1996).

I wake this morning thinking about a stick tossing exercise we did in our grad class how I lean forward and gently toss the stick to my partner how careful I am not to let it drop and suddenly I think that it's really about not trusting others to be ok if I disappoint them (don't do things correctly) or maybe about me not trusting me to do things correctly (whatever that is)

The more I work with letting go and trusting process, the more I realize how difficult and complex a task that is, at least for me. I acknowledge how my understanding of this has been intellectual only, how I live my life at the periphery of this understanding, mainly because of fear. How learning is truly a spiral and recursive process. How learning that

makes a difference requires going down, going deeper, staying with something, with someone, perhaps. Letting one's 'self' be affected, transformed. Surrendering, moment by moment, in each moment. And also not surrendering, not completely erasing the 'self.' Being somewhere. In relation-to perhaps.

she is confused resists wants things to be clear knowable and so traces her confusions resistances the intersections of confusions resistances in research in teaching in everyday experience

(I can't help remembering how my dad used to always say that everything you need is inside you that you don't need God or Sunday school just listen to your heart and how as a child I guessed that that meant I was supposed to do everything myself not ask for help and so I tried but somewhere along the way this is all breaking down)

why are we so often hesitant
to reach out for help and to
admit fear or failure as
teachers and as students? why
does that seem so difficult?
(October 28, p. 18)

even to question is a sign of
weakness and it's not accepted you
can't be seen to be weak a comment
made to me was something along the
lines of even though you're feeling
this way you're feeling stressed or
whatever you can't show it you can't
show it as a teacher you can't
(March 3, p. 17)

to admit that you're anxious
or you're worried isn't that a
big thing? I work a lot with
first year teachers and student
teachers and seasoned
teachers I think that's a big
thing being fearful it's very
difficult especially for
someone who's seasoned to
go back and say the things
that I used to do that worked
just aren't working anymore

and it's that constant pressure
of being up there
(March 3, p. 5)

I cannot write cannot focus do not know what to write about feel like I cannot do this like I am not enough that I will be judged will judge myself worry that I have nothing to say that I have to figure out what I am supposed to say cannot see the keys to type blurred through tears I fear I will have to give up fear that I will lose my self in the process

(or maybe find myself is that the fear? the self I have avoided pushed down ignored for so long)

putting all my energy out there
instead of just being centered in
myself being attached to outcome
not being present in the moment
(November 25, p. 8)

I had to rethink my research plan to include others. Over time, eight women agreed to meet with me to explore their experiences of fear and pain in teaching. I outlined a starting point for our work. The design was heavily influenced by my understanding of feminist theory and practice as well as my work and play over the past fifteen years in women's groups involving writing and spiritual forays such as aboriginal healing circles. Much feminist theory as well as the epistemologies of various indigenous people are grounded in the recognition and acknowledgement of interconnectedness (see, for example, Carle, 1999; Ermine, 1995). The circle as an ancient symbol of consensus building is foregrounded. The notion of a circle, a collective became integral to my vision. Early in the process, we read a passage from Baldwin's book (1994), *Calling the Circle: The First and Future Culture.*

> A circle is not just a meeting with the chairs rearranged. A circle is a way of doing things differently than we have become accustomed to. The circle is a return to our original form of community as well as a leap forward to create a new form of community. By calling the circle, we discover an ancient process of consultation and communion that, for tens of thousands of years, held the human community together and shaped its course. (p. 24)

(the writer feels as if she will do something wrong and get in big trouble she knows this sounds like a child but the feeling comes over her suddenly and from no where she has heard other women say the same thing what is the something wrong they might do?)

I'm afraid that working in this group is not safe am afraid for the participants their well-being for being responsible for them I'm afraid of the messiness and affecting people being affected by them not trusting myself to be ok to handle things

and you're supposed to have
the answers you're supposed to know
teacher as expert there's an answer for every
problem if you don't know it you
haven't looked it up in the right
place it's not like the good thing is
to explore questions the good thing is
to have answers so it's not good to
be able to live in questions challenge
things open things up we want to
close them shut them down keep a tight
(November 16, p. 9)

In the initial meeting where the participants met one another and where we discussed the proposed process, I voiced my hope that our work would be that of a collective, a circle where each would feel free to talk, to contribute, even to change the course of the work. I had previously expressed to my committee my commitment to being open to process, to even changing the questions of the study, if that was what presented itself. When I transcribed the next meeting, however, the first where we actually worked through the process, I was dismayed to see how much of the time I talked—and how I kept saying about the research process, "I'd like it to be. . . ." The participants, in turn, asked questions like, "Is this what you expected?" and, "Are you getting what you need?" I kept trying to evade such questions, countering with comments that indicated that I had no particular expectations. Though I believed in process and wanted to let it unfold, I did have a well-defined plan. I clearly felt the tension between wanting to be open to the process and how it might evolve as we worked together and having to start somewhere as we got to know each other.

is that what you're looking
for something like that?
(July 22, p. 11)

we're not looking for
anything in particular we just
need to go with it
(July 22, p. 12)

I thought what the heck are
we supposed to be doing? I
just don't care I'll just do
whatever I'm going to
do anyway
(July 22, p. 15)

I also thought while I was
writing about your
expectations because I'm
analyzing myself and I'm
learning about me but is this
what you want?
(July 22, p. 18)

I was not prepared for my own resistances to working collaboratively, my own inability to let go, my fears about doing so. I was not prepared for the fact that my acceptance of the organic and evolutionary nature of collaborative work was intellectual only, that a far deeper part of me—maybe even the cells of my body—had different patterns and intentions—ways of being&knowing—ingrained.

I have to stop writing sit on the floor in the sun and suddenly the tears are there and I feel a deep sense of loss try to go into it stay with it but thoughts intervene distract I do a clearing exercise a physical clearing of negativity and some yoga to ease the tension in my upper back I have a headache legs feel weak

is there really an answer that we're
moving toward or is it really just the
process I'm always in conflict myself
because I'm living in this institution
I'm doing research where I'm
expected to do certain things and
there's a part of me that really doesn't
believe in that system or the whole
thing at all and so I'm resisting it but
I'm part of it and I don't know

where I am
(November 25, p. 11)

I have been fussing about structure vs unstructure should I structure this more for the safety of the participants I worry about how they refer directly to the author of a piece in their responses worry for the author's safety am starting to see that it's really my safety that's the problem here as a young teacher I kept everything in strict order under my control so as not to let things get away on me

I might have to let go of Haug and her process not worry about following it too closely let things unfold as they need to it was clear to me yesterday that talk is crucial in this group though our individual experiences are important and our personal work with those experiences is also important the work—what comes out of the group as a whole—the ideas bouncing off one another is what will both provide group cohesion and yield richness in terms of ideas and insights

the work that we're doing in here is really
important being brave enough to share
these stories say them out loud draw
them and write about them that's so
important I just don't
think we do that just keep going
(October 13, p. 21)

talking like this gives us
strength because we know
other people are
feeling the same
(March 3, p. 17)

it has helped me to move on I
have a lot of trouble with my
principal I know what she
expects through doing this I
can actually sit with her now
and probably have a better
ability to look at her and say
let's see the person inside
(March 3, p. 18)

it is a community thing
(March 3, p. 19)

being able to say this is what
I believe this is my gut

feeling sometimes you don't
move on that you know
(March 3, p. 19)

why do I feel so afraid when I go to these meetings afraid that everything will go awry (whatever that means) and it will be all my fault afraid that people will see this as aimless pointless afraid that I cannot really 'explain' what it is we're doing afraid that something will go 'wrong'

The fourth meeting that we scheduled was a crucial point in my awareness of how much more I needed to let go of the process, to acknowledge where I was in it. Only two women showed up. I cried. And I had to face my disappointment, my fear that everything would fall apart, at least in the way I had envisioned it. The three of us talked, and I came to believe that the people who needed to be there for each meeting would be there. I had to open to trust, to not knowing where this was going. Let go of my plan. I realized too how much I had tried to erase myself from the research process—how I had tried to deny what I needed and wanted, how I had evaded such questions. I did have a clearly defined plan, *and* I also wanted the process to unfold itself. I had been operating at both extremes of an either/or way of seeing things—either all group with me erased completely or all me being directive and structuring the process. One or the other, at different times. I had not yet realized the possibility of both&and. The one thing I knew for sure was that erasing my 'self' completely from the group relationship we were creating was not going to work. I decided to be as clear and articulate as I could about who I was and where I was in this process. Somewhere in-between the extremes. Moving. Changing.

I wake today with a deep sense of melancholy see how I have placed my joy outside myself allowed myself to be disappointed about what others do when what they do is not what I want or expect see how I want them to fill me up give me energy paste over my cracks and also how I build walls withdraw so that others can not use me in this way

it's hard to change, reroute
you're not sure what's right
to abandon it kind of evolves
as it goes along

that's the value of not doing
the scientific method

and the messiness of not
doing it
(November 16, p. 3)

Soon after I made the decision to write myself into the process, the energy and cohesion of the group began to build. Victoria shared a story about a difficult relationship with her principal, how she had introduced Victoria to the staff as someone who had been out of the profession for fourteen years, and how she continued to demonstrate her lack of trust in Victoria's ability to handle her work. We talked a bit, and I was thinking about asking the group to respond when Marie burst in with another story—one that just needed to be told because of its intensity and immediacy. She read her piece—which was about physical fear—something that we had not yet explored—and then a long discussion ensued. The energy of the group propelled us along while I worried about Victoria and the fact that we had not yet responded to her story. I knew that what was happening was important though. As a result of Marie reading her story, each of us in turn was able to remember and share a similar experience. We reached a new level of intimacy, a sense of safety with one another. Ellis asked Marie how she felt after hearing the responses to her story. She then led a physical clearing through breathing and stretching for all of us. And people began to say what they wanted. When I suggested that we respond to Victoria's story, for example, the group agreed that they had had enough intensity for one evening, that it was time to go home.

do you feel safe enough? is
there something we should be
doing differently when we do
the responses?

I don't feel like there's
anybody in here that
wouldn't be interested in
hearing otherwise they
wouldn't be here

I certainly wouldn't cry if I
didn't feel safe I actually like
this room better

I like the table for writing

I like kiva better I like
the space

there's something more
accessible about this room
a little closer

we're closer to each other I
was thinking that too

we're closer knit in this room
I like kiva the design of it but
it's very big

I like the lighting in kiva it's
soft seems harsh in here

we just have to turn down the
lights bring more candles
(October 13, pp. 18-19)

there is no happily ever after no ending that shows how the researcher transformed herself through the process found a comfortable middle space where she was able to define herself forever (or even for awhile) and from there write clearly and definitely about what happened in the group she is still living the complexities of learning to let go and of rereading her experiences and the group members are still in process too sometimes reconnecting bumping up against each other themselves and rereading what we shared messiness remains

when I came in I had a plan because
I couldn't come in without a plan it's
like going into a classroom I was
willing for my expectations to be
blown out of the water at least
intellectually and as they did get
blown out of the water I could feel
my resistance but I really want to
work with that because whatever
unfolds is what unfolds
that might be the most
important thing learning about process
how that relates to fear
(January 27, pp. 22-23)

they are hiking in a forest along the ridge of a mountain in the Selkirk range the way is steep the packs heavy tents sleeping bags food campstoves everything they need for a few days in the backcountry she is cheerful but a bit nervous she thinks about bears as always they are in grizzly country after all they stop for a rest at what looks like a moonscape a rock slide she begins to wonder when the trail will level off (they were told the hike was fairly flat) they scramble up steep inclines time and time again and she begins to surmise that this is how it is going to be she become angry at Heather who has arranged this outing she goes to blame then self-pity she makes cutting remarks to her husband in an attempt to get him to solve this problem for her but he is concerned with the weight of his own pack she sees that none of the tactics she uses in difficult situations work she wants to cry go home but doesn't want to retrace all those steps then drive the narrow twisting loggers' road back down the mountain alone legs shaky she determines that there is nothing to do but put one foot in front of the other surrender stop resisting

she decides that she will not think just observe her mind how it works that something she can do is trust her body she thinks about the qi of the three or four hundred year old trees all around and tries to open to their energy almost immediately she feels supported is buoyed up knows very clearly that they are safe that there is nothing at all to fear she feels confident in her body being shifts

our joy is not being
locked in a box joy is
allowing that creative person to
go out and say I'm going to try
this and if it explodes in my face I'm
comfortable seeing other people's
expectations and how that limits me because
in meeting their expectations I'm not really
a success that part of me that keeps me
passionate needs to make
failures not meet their needs
(March 3, p. 20)

I stepped out of the
box for a year then came back
had a different view went to teach
in Europe a more global outlook helped
me when I went back but when you're
back in the box you need
to step out again
(March 3, p. 20)

the problem for me is getting
out of the box I love when I'm
actually teaching actually
working with the kids but the other
worries that I take home with me self-doubts
and everything else I can't
can't keep going it's too much
(March 3, p. 20)

I let the box
constrict me all the time
March 3, p. 20)

groups like this allow you to
have a spark again where you go
out and you go oh yeah it's ok

moving out of the box for

just a bit wondering what if
what might it look like
(March 3, p. 21)

how you get into really uncomfortable
miserable patterns how difficult it is when you
fall back into familiar places how it is to go to those
old patterns giving in or meeting other people's needs or
looking judging doing internal judging from
external sources which is awful

I was just thinking about those
patterns too how deeply entrenched they are and
I don't even know if I can see over the top of the
trenches it's kind of hard to get out of there
(March 3, p. 23)

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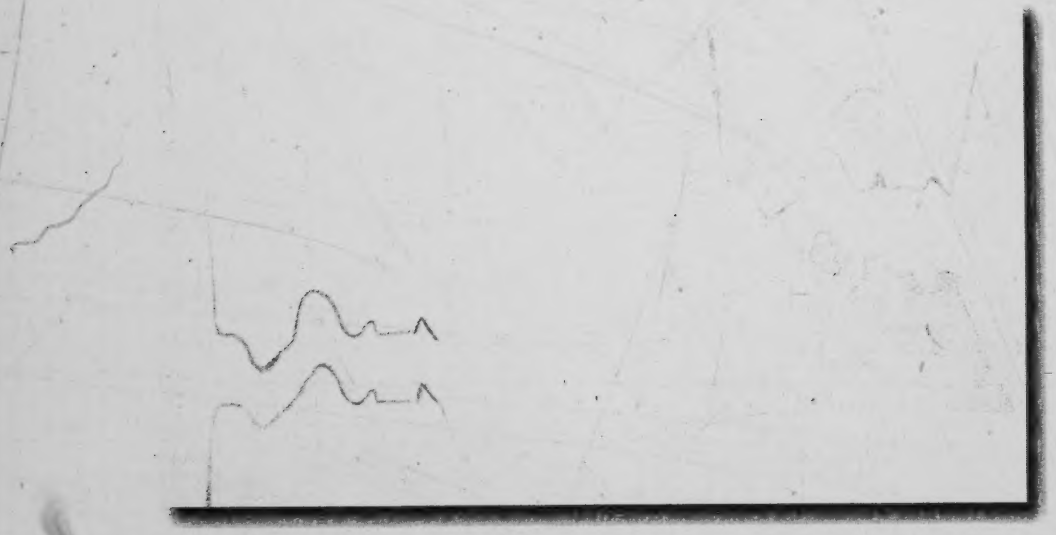

(she explores here a way of doing research a way of being&knowing that operates within a different ethic than that of positivistic and early qualitative research paradigms where the complexity and messiness and indeterminability of everyday life is neatly packaged up tied with a ribbon and presented in a seemingly neutral way—paradigms where inquiry is initiated by a rational self-conscious researcher whose direction is assumed to be clear

from the start where replication of the design is deemed possible and where the language and form of reports are unquestioned where foundational assumptions include the existence of transcendent Truths which Reason properly exercised can help us to realize she concurs instead with Foucault who claims that our imperative as scholars is "to get free of ourselves" (1985 in St. Pierre, 1997a, p. 3) with St. Pierre who elaborates that such an imperative is "a description of a particular deconstructive approach to both knowledge production and being in the world" (1997a, p. 3) and with L. Neilsen who notes that inquiry is "a destabilizing force which researchers have feared and which we now invite" (1998, p. 263)—an ongoing attempt to discover the changing boundaries of being&knowing she accepts that a different way of being&knowing requires a different kind of research an enterprise with no clear path a destination that is not always apparent—where destination is in fact not the sole purpose of the work research that foregrounds process a way of being&knowing that requires deep listening being-in-touch relationality connection to others a certain degree of trust an ongoing critical sensibility)

St. Pierre (1997a) describes such research as "a nomadic adventure that cannot be defined in advance because it takes advantage of flows and multiplicities and disjunctions to make a different sense in different ways or to refuse to make *sense* at all"—research that is about "mapping, not tracing . . . and about risking the loss of those very things we believe we cannot do without" (p. 9, my emphasis). Our taken-for-granted assumptions about experience, our 'common sense' beliefs, the very epistemological and ontological bases of our existence are called into question (see Weedon, 1997, pp. 72-77 re: commonsense beliefs). Such work is necessarily unsettling.

I'm just thinking about an inservice that I
worked in a couple of weeks ago we were
trying to talk about different ways of reading
and writing in the classroom and we had
a lot of resistance from the teachers we
stuck with it even though it was getting really
uncomfortable and finally one person said
you know I'm afraid of changing what I do I
don't want to change it's comfortable and I just
keep doing it even if the kids don't like it and
even if we're not getting the kind of results that
we would like at least
it's comfortable
(November 16, p. 8)

you're not allowed to
live in messiness and live
in disorder and live
in chaos
(November 16, p. 3)

I'm scared
of going out of
the box
(March 3, p. 21)

Shildrick (1997) writes that feminist ethics in a postmodern era and beyond requires tolerance of ambiguity, lack of closure—the ability to work outside the heretofore unalterable Truths and belief systems of Western philosophy, a space where language and subjectivity have also been called into question (pp. 1-6; see also, Phillips, 2002, pp. 9-10; Shildrick, 1997, pp. 1-7; Weedon, 1997, pp. 21, 71-103; 1999, p. 3). The researcher herself is fragmented, changeable, one who is seemingly more vulnerable while simultaneously implicated in the constructs of 'reality' that predominate a particular worldview. She is called to be more critically aware of the ways in which she has been shaped, a seemingly endless process in which she is created by and also creates herself in and through discourse. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) describe the "triple crisis" that forefronts efforts in qualitative inquiry: the crisis of representation where the researcher's reports of experience, of the other, and of the research process itself can no longer be considered true and objective, the crisis of legitimation where the markers and language of traditional research are called into question, and a third, as yet unnamed, crisis where we must examine the possibilities for transformation in societies and people considered written text (pp. 16-18). The foundations of being&knowing are suspect, changeable, and so are the foundations of research. Uncertainty, not-knowingness prevail.

The found poetry (November 16, p. 9) has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

whenever we come here it seems like
whatever needs to be discussed gets
discussed and then we go home and
whoever needs to be here is here and
whoever's not in on this particular discussion
is here when they need to be here
(January 27, p. 23)

the right people are always there for
the next step and it doesn't make sense but
it seems to be true
(January 27, p. 23)

is there really an answer
that we're moving toward
or is it really just the process?
(November 25, p. 13)

> The foundations may have crumbled, but we are obliged to continue. We are in play, working on the verge of intelligibility with no guarantee of liberation. We understand that we may never " 'adequately' 'solve' the problems of being, truth, or subjectivity" (Flax in St. Pierre, 1997b). On the contrary, we must learn to live in the middle of things, in the tension of conflict and confusion and possibility; and we must become adept at making do with the messiness of that condition and at finding agency within rather than assuming it in advance of the ambiguity of language and cultural practice. In addition, we must be on the lookout for each other as we negotiate meaning and create new descriptions of the world. We can never get off the hook by appealing to a transcendental Ethics. We are always on the hook, responsible, everywhere, all the time. (St. Pierre, 1997b, pp. 176-177)

Irigaray insists that the basis of an ethics for our times is the acceptance of sexual difference, a way of being&knowing that acknowledges the feminine and explores, even

recreates, its geneaology (1993b, pp. 116-117, 2002, p. 127). Listening is foundational—listening that does not preconceive what is to be heard, collapsing all into sameness, but that is, rather, open, based on silence, respect, and a firm acknowledgement of not-knowing (see, for example, Irigaray, 1996, pp. 115-119). Foucault too, in describing the ethics he sees in the work of Deleuze and Guttari, insists that we acknowledge difference and multiplicity over unitary concepts and that we eschew former ways of systematizing being&knowing such as hierarchical and linear formations in favor of more flowing, changeable, and disjunctive processes and re-presentations (Foucault, 2000; St. Pierre, 1997a, p. 3). A revised research ethic demands a willingness to live and work outside known boundaries. An acknowledgment of and respect for otherness. A willingness to be silent. To listen.

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who invented the
border? borders don't
exist borders are invisible lines
that stir up war they are as
incredible as unicorns
(from Cixous, 1993, pp. 130-131)

every increment of consciousness
every step forward is a *travesía* a
crossing I am again an alien in a new
territory and again and again but if
I escape conscious awareness escape
"knowing" I won't be moving
knowledge makes me more aware
makes me more conscious I am
no longer the same
person I was before
(from Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 70)

the person who trembles
while crossing a border casts doubt
on their own definition not only
on their passport not only on
their driver's license but also
on every aspect and

form of their definition
(from Cixous, 1993, p. 131)

(once a shift in
subjectivity occurs the rest of
the world shifts as well and it is
impossible to go back)
(from St. Pierre, 1997a, p. 6)

iv.

underworld

Inanna descends leaves
word with Ninshubur her servant
to send help after three
days farther and farther
down meeting gate after gate
seven times she disrobes more
until she reaches bottom naked
face to face with Ereshkigal dark queen
of the underworld death transformation rage
greed fear destruction suffering loss she
naked suffering too unleashes fury sentences
Inanna to death hangs
her corpse on a peg flesh
rots turns green

Ereshkigal I wish
I had a picture of
you dark queen of
the nether space under
world sister I have felt
in blackness hatred fury
I have recognized
you want to keep your
picture where I can
see it hold you in
reverence up here
above but you are
not to be seen only
felt in the gut in the
shivers of the scalp are
you the blackness around
her around Inanna?

in Ereshkigal's eyes of death
Inanna sees herself her depths
and dies eyes that deny illusion
see what is ugly terrifying

Ereshkigal dark goddess once had
an aspect of fertility and growth she
represents the different states the
transformations of energy
to patriarchy death is a rape of
life fear violence something
to be controlled
(from Perera, 1981, p. 21)

> Unlike the hero's journey of meeting an exterior challenge and defeating a foe, this feminine journey moves downward and inward, and demands sitting, waiting, and rotting in order to find . . . something that does not serve the patriarchy. During this process, her connection to the old way of life, the old sense of self, must die. This confrontation can be paralyzing. (Zweig in Perera, 1990, p. 234)

***

> There is no moving from superficiality to depth—and every spiritual path is about moving from the surface to the depths—without entering the dark. . . . The divine is to be met in the depths of darkness as well as in the light. Daring the dark means entering nothingness and letting it be nothingness while it works its mystery on us. Daring the dark also means allowing pain to be pain and learning from it. (Fox, 1991, pp. 19-20)

Many feminists involved with spiritual work speak about 'daring the dark' as central to their process of empowering themselves, fully realizing a subjectivity of their own. A female subjectivity. Difference. Something not written in male terms. Many descend to the underworld, suffer the wrath of Ereshkigal in facing the fear and pain of being positioned as female persons and thus begin the process of dying to old ways of being&knowing. Such death, as transformation, is significant personally, but, importantly, also extends beyond the parameters of the 'self' and contributes to social change. Chung Hyun Kyung, for example, describes pain and suffering as the "epistemological starting point for Asian women in their search for a full humanity"—"an *epistemology from the broken body*" (1992, p. 39). She delineates an

emerging Asian women's spirituality, and describes the experience of 'impasse' as one moment in the process.

> Asian women's spirituality begins with the reality of impasse. This impasse is caused by their experience of economic, political, cultural, and psychological oppression. . . . This feeling of impasse leads Asian women to hate and be ashamed of themselves. The social norms and power structures of their respective cultures and societies make them feel like caged animals. Asian women feel a profound hopelessness, for they do not know of places where they can find help and security. Continuous poverty, political repression, wars, and misogyny produce despair deep within Asian women. (pp. 86-87)

One result of impasse is a feeling of *han,* the "lump in the spirit" referred to by Korean feminist and male *minjung* theologians. *Han* is a stuckness that results from ongoing oppression and the unexpressed feelings that go with such experience (Chung Hyun Kyung, 1992, p. 42). *Jung han* is acceptance of *han*—belief in fate and the necessity of suffering in this life for salvation in the beyond—a belief underscored by some Western Christianities. Chung Hyun Kyung explains that "in this cultural atmosphere, the introduction of a rigid doctrine of predestination and the cross by fundamentalist Western missionaries added more burden to Korean Christian women's lives. It made them more passive and accepting of their own victimization" (1992, p. 43). Asian women's resistance to oppression and victimization takes place partly through recognition of their complicity with the oppressors, often through a breaking of silence in community (pp. 39-47, 85-91).

Impasse is similar to *nothingness,* what Christ (1986) describes as an important moment of the spiritual journey. In drawing on the work of Novak (1970), she explains that nothingness is a "sense of emptiness felt by those who have broken their ties with conventional sources of value, but have not yet discovered their grounding in new sources" (p. 14). It can be paralyzing for a time, but is ultimately liberatory. Though she acknowledges the importance of nothingness for all people, Christ concurs with Daly (1973) in explaining that women's experiences of this aspect of the journey is markedly different from men's.

> Women's experiences of nothingness begin at birth and continue throughout their lives. . . . Being female means that *she* is not important, except in her relationships to boys and men. . . . Parents and teachers will rarely tell a girl that she is less important than her brothers and other boys, for that would contradict the American ideal of equality and justice for all. The message of her inferiority will be communicated in more subtle ways: by lack of concern, by failure to fully nurture her potential for growth and development, by not expecting her to succeed at difficult tasks. And because the messages are mixed, a woman may begin to feel that her mother's, father's, or teachers' lack of attention stems from some failing of her own. Internalizing the voices of her oppressors, the currents of her feelings of inferiority and self-hatred run strong and deep. (1986, p. 15)

***

the view from the window is a sunset as the sky turns orange pink along the horizon pale blue navy blue further up stars emerge light from the kitchen glances snow on the railings of the deck roof of the shed neighbor's garage branches of the maple breeze gently she stands in the noise the chatter the crumbs on the floor looking out out through the frosted pane hands pressing hard against the coolness of the sink

the window pane
cool cool
beneath her palms as she
presses against it
presses
the window
pane cool
pain hot
pressing on
against
the view
through the pane
scene
this angle
point of view .

break

shards sharp
breaking the view

view from the window
window framed
frost around the pane
pressing through
coolness
hot pain
red

the view from the window is a sunset as the sky turns orange pink along the horizon pale blue navy blue further up stars emerge light from the kitchen glances snow on the railings of the deck roof of the shed neighbor's garage branches of the maple breeze gently she stands in the noise the chatter the crumbs on the floor looking out out through the frosted pane hands pressing hard against the coolness of the sink

***

> I have drawn the H. You will have recognized it depending on which language you are immersed in. This is what writing is: I one language, I another language, and between the two, the line that makes them vibrate; writing forms a passageway between two shores. . . .
>
> I was saying: this H, this ladder is writing. This is how I figure it: the ladder is neither immobile nor empty. It is animated. It incorporates the movement it arouses and inscribes. . . .
>
> This ladder has a *descending* movement, because the ascent, which evokes effort and difficulty is towards the bottom. I say *ascent* downward because we ordinarily believe the descent is easy. The writers I love are *descenders*, explorers of the lowest and deepest. . . . (Cixous, 1993, pp. 3-5)

Cixous says that the writers she loves best are those who have the courage to go to the depths in their writing. Writing, she claims, is a way of realizing a relationship with death (1993, p. 12). She overturns notions of death in her work and espouses the belief that death is a passageway to openness, abundance, transformation, an & space of sorts.[1] "We need to lose the world, to lose a world, and to discover that there is more than one world and that the world isn't what we think it is" (1993, p. 10). Death, she believes, is the place of truth (pp. 33, 34, 36, 37, 49), the moment one can say what has never been

said before. "The desire to die is the desire to *know*; it is not the desire to disappear, and it is not suicide; it is the desire to enjoy" (p. 34). It is the desire to live as we have never lived before. Naked (p. 49). Herself.

> To begin (writing, living) we must have death. I like the dead, they are the doorkeepers who while closing one side "give" way to the other. We must have death, but young, ferocious, fresh death, the death of the day, today's death. The one that comes right up to us so suddenly we don't have time to avoid it, I mean feeling its breath touching us. Ha! . . .
>
> It's true that neither death nor the doorkeepers are enough to open the door We must also have the courage, the desire, to approach, to go the door. (Cixous, 1993, p. 7)

Death, the dead as doorkeepers, closing one side and opening another . . . . For Cixous, going to the depths, having the courage to do so, looking deep inside the self in a truthful way is accomplished through language, the process of writing. Many women writers sound her call for exploring the depths, for working with fear and pain in writing.[2]

> sometimes you can write for weeks but feel you are
> treading water a block somewhere inside resistance
> when you write you are afraid of what will
> emerge lay bare even deeper layers of
> consciousness push back the frontiers of
> what we know about ourselves what
> society knows about itself
> (from Wolf, 1988, pp. 8-9)

Turner-Vesselago (1995) urges us to follow our energy, to unblock energy so often bound up with fear, the unknown—and go 'fearward' with our writing. Of those who choose to do so, Wolf (1988), for example, writes with&through her childhood experiences in a Fascist country as well as with&through her identity as a woman. She discusses *subjective authenticity* in writing, a way of being with words and with the world; she sees writing "not as an end product, but as a process which continuously runs alongside life, helping to shape and interpret it: writing can be seen as a way of being more intensely involved in the world, as the concentration and focusing of thought, word and deed" (p. 21). Brandt too courageously explores her journey in and through language, her poetry, the transformative experiences she suffered—in the original sense of the word, 'to go through'—in speaking her own truth, the truth of herself. She let go of

everything, her marriage, her Mennonite culture, her family, to hear her own voice, to come to writing. She echoes Wolf in acknowledging the difficult work of facing fear in writing.

> When I started writing poetry about 10 years ago, it was like stepping off the edge of the world, into the void. I didn't know who I was, I didn't know where all these voices were coming from, inside me, wanting desperately to get out. I thought maybe I would get killed for writing the forbidden things. . . . But then I got everything back, well, almost everything—some of it in the form of deep grief—much more beautifully and completely than I ever had it before. I do feel truly "born again," as the old phrase went, reborn into a sense of the magical possibilities in life that come partly from having gone to the edge of the world and peered over into the void, from having looked death in the face and experiencing the outer limits of what it means to be human. It isn't possible to come back from there into a sense of wholeness without a lot of luck, or grace, or whatever you want to call it, without help from other people and from guiding spirits. (1996, pp. 156, 158)

Campbell (1994) too discusses fear in writing, the desire to avoid, to procrastinate so as not to have to be fully *with* what dwells in the depths. She discusses her work with blocked writers, the ways she uses meditation as part of the writing process to help them focus on the present. "At the root of a writing block is fear, and meditation offers a space, at once both private and public, where fears or pain can be named, traced, embraced, and eventually released" (p. 248). She further details her experiences with Susan, a woman who had been unable to actually write a journalism piece she had been researching for two years. Susan completed a clustering exercise, wrote a letter to the frightened part of herself, and worked with guided meditation. She realized that she did not feel her own authority, that she constantly looked outside herself for affirmation. "Susan learned that power was her natural state of being, yet she had learned to deny and avoid that power" (p. 249). Though Campbell engages meditation as an aid to releasing fear in writing, she reiterates its importance as a practice, as an end in itself. "Indeed, when we immerse ourselves in the present, without expectations or resistance, we experience our connection with Spirit, which is the source of all healing although that healing may come through many channels--another's hands, medicine, new thoughts, memories, breath" (p. 250).

***

The power of language-as-process in awakening to the ways in which we have been positioned and as a process of moving *with* experiences of fear and pain has been discussed at length too in the work of those exploring feminist spirituality. Chung Hyun Kyung (1992) and Christ (1986), for example, both emphasize the importance of storytelling in community—the interwoven movements of naming experience, of listening, of being listened to—and of how such an interweaving effects transformation. Both speak of 'moments' in women's spiritual journeys, moments which can be discerned as integral to the rhythm of women's emergence into their own powers, moments which can occur through the process of naming experience through story. Both reiterate the point made by Irigaray and Ruether that women's spiritual quests are rooted in the body as material being (Christ, 1986, p. 21; Chung Hyun Kyung, 1992, pp. 38-39). Both speak of the need to acknowledge pain and to question conventional values and social beliefs. For both, profound feelings of shame and inadequacy must be endured in the midst of deep reflection on one's culture and its unjust and unethical treatment of marginalized groups. Storytelling in community, whether in oral or written form, is seen as central to the process of naming past and emerging experiences as well as for articulating visions of hope.

For Chung Hyun Kyung, storytelling in oral form is the foundation for a new Asian women's theology of liberation; writing as a means to communicate such matters is only beginning to emerge (1992, pp. 102-103).

> Asian women's approach to the creation of theology. . . is *inductive*, drawn from experience and commitment. It is also *collective* and *inclusive*. . . . It starts with women's *storytelling*. Women from various backgrounds gather together and listen to one another's stories of victimization and liberation. Educated middle-class women theologians are committed to inviting or visiting poor farmers, slum-dwellers, dowry victims, and prostitutes and listening to their life stories. Storytelling has been women's way of inheriting truth in many Asian countries because the written, literary world has belonged to privileged males. Until the turn of the century many Asian families did not teach girls how to read or write. (pp. 103-104)

Christ is interested in two aspects of language: as a symbol system in need of examination and also as a process of naming experience through writing in community. Her work highlights the struggle to find ways of expressing women's spiritual experiences in a language not their own. In *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women*

Writers on a Spiritual Quest (1986), she goes to women of letters to find support, writers such as Kate Chopin, Margaret Atwood, Doris Lessing, Adrienne Rich and Ntozake Shange. Christ notes that traditional language must be used in non-traditional ways; she uses terms such as *nothingness, awakening,* and *insight* from mystical discourses to help in her discussions—but finds that these words do not yet accurately portray the experiences described by women writers and lived by their characters (1986, p. xii). She refers to a *deformation* where traditional language is used in unusual contexts to help open meaning (p. xiii).

Christ's work with women in community includes as a central aspect the process of writing in response to shared readings (1986, pp. ix-xxxii; see also Swearingen, 1994 re: women writing in community). This process of writing—personal reflections on readings and the integration of personal experiences and insights—is a means of journeying spiritually and moving into power, effecting transformation.

> The experience of writing in class in the presence of others seems to evoke deeper reflection and sharing than either writing at home and sharing in class or simply sharing in class. It is easier for those of us who are insecure about our writing to write in the presence of other women who are also writing. The limited time for our writing seems to encourage us to dive immediately into our depths. (1986, p. xvi)

Voy cagandome de miedo, buscando lugares acuevados. I don't want to know, I don't want to be seen. My resistance, my refusal to know some truth about myself brings on that paralysis, depression--brings on the *Coatlicue* state. At first I feel exposed and opened to the depth of my dissatisfaction. Then I feel myself closing, hiding, holding myself together rather than allowing myself to fall apart.

Sweating, with a headache, unwilling to communicate, frightened by sudden noises, *estoy asustada.* In the Mexican culture, it is called *susto,* the soul frightened out of the body. The afflicted one is allowed to rest and recuperate, to withdraw into the "underworld" without drawing condemnation.

I descend into *miktlan,* the underworld. In the "place of the dead" I wallow, sinking deeper and deeper. When I reach bottom, something forces me to push up, walk toward the mirror, confront the face in the mirror. But I dig in my heels and resist. I don't want to see what's behind *Coatlicue's* eyes, her hollow sockets. I can't confront her face to face; I must take small sips of her face through the corners of my eyes, chip away at the ice a sliver at a time.

Behind the ice mask I see my own eyes. They will not look at me. *Miro que estoy encabronada, miro la resistencia*—resistance to knowing, to letting go, to that deep ocean where I once dived into death. I am afraid of drowning. Resistance to sex, intimate touching, opening myself to that alien other where I am out of control, not on patrol. The outcome on the other side unknown, the reins falling and the horses plunging blindly over the crumbling path rimming the edge of the cliff, plunging to its thousand foot drop. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 70)

out of control not on patrol horses plunging blindly over the crumbling path rimming the edge of the cliff plunging

reaching into the
bag I draw a
rune rough between
my fingers blank
it says leap*
into the void
empty handed

(trembling at the edge
passport driver's
license falling through
fingers)

* between resist and let go hold and surrender before and beyond staying home
changing home

today I have looked through my notebooks and journals the records of my interior life for the past ten years or so and can find no description of the physical symptoms of the panic attacks I endured after my father's death how strange I think then see how I drew street signs things I saw from the window while travelling in the car copied passages from books during the most difficult times a cold control a weird disconnectedness a doctor in emergency once said to me just copy things down even names and numbers from the phone book focus so that you can get a grip on your body the body can be too much and too often stimulated by adrenaline too often aroused by fear to a place where metabolism cannot get back down to a reasonable level the body is out of control spins out of control often and unexpectedly even when you don't feel stressed afraid I did not write about the physical experience of panic attacks for fear that writing about them would make them come alive again

and panic attacks show you that you don't have control that your body is has its own dynamic its own intelligence that your conscious mind is only a tiny part of who you are and if you don't want to listen to your body your self then your body will shout louder teach you the lessons you refuse to learn any other way

and you are forced to surrender to waves of fear waves that wash over you that come as predictably as strong as the contractions of childbirth for me a feeling of swelling the feeling that I was swelling as in an allergy attack looking at myself in the mirror convinced that my eyes my hands were swelling that my throat was next Bill telling me that I was not swelling would have to trust him sit with it telling me that I had to quit resisting the waves just go into the waves let them take me wherever they were going that I had to stop trying to control what is out of control that I was not alone would surely not die

(the text insists that this part stay right here stay as it is even though the writer keeps deleting it moving it changing it sometimes she just doesn't seem to get it doesn't know when to stop messing around what does she think she is doing?)

fear of something that stops me from
breathing I can't play fight or pillow fight I can't
learn to swim when we were on holidays in the
Okanagan I got out in the middle of the lake
with a life jacket on I was really really afraid
I thought the life jacket would not hold me up

I thought I have to do this for
the kids show them there's
nothing to be afraid of
(January 27, pp. 6-7)

fear is in a way conditioned into
thinking we use that word it's not
differentiated properly
looking at what fear is and
giving it a name
(January 27, p. 7; May 12, p. 2)

Fear is actually a biochemical reaction in the body involving both muscular contractions and glandular secretions that prepare the body to defend itself against danger. If it were possible to fight physically against one's sickness and the danger of death, then the fear reaction would be discharged in action . . . . But in so many cases, such as illness, there is no physical way to act to deal with the danger. In fact, the danger itself does not exist in the present moment, but is a creation of the future projections of the mind. Thus a chronic state of anxiety is created in the body. . . .
(Selby, 1989, pp. 16-17)

is this fear? anxiety? worry?
an intuitive nudge? what
is this? this ominous sense of
somethingness? do I label things
fear when they're not really fear? when have
I really been in a fearful situation? a nightmare
heart palpitating once working psych
there was this murderer he'd chopped his
family members up with an axe I used to
hate going into his room in the dark
(January 27, p. 6)

at the beginning when we
started talking about fear in teaching I
really had trouble getting
my mind around it because I've never
felt like I'm really very fearful I mean I've
felt anxious but
(January 27, p. 6)

the whole world is filled with
fear my entire waking moment of every
day is somewhat fearful I don't
know how you get out of it I don't know
how you stop it I don't know how
you get out of it I don't know
how you stop it
(November 16, p. 10)

In the original form of the word, to worry someone else was to harass, strangle, or choke them. Likewise, to worry oneself is a form of self-harassment. . . . Worry is the fear we manufacture. . . .

The word *anxiety*, like *worry*, stems from a root that means "to choke." (deBecker, 1997, pp. 347, 354)

I have anxieties worries and they are
about self-concept like how am I going to
project? what are people going to think? am
I going to be rejected? are they just going to
shake their heads? categories fear of
death fear of rejection fear that I won't be
part of the group fear that I'm going to be
analyzed there must be
a lot of different categories
(January 27, pp. 6, 8)

in what ways are fear and pain
constructed experiences?
(May 12, p. 2)

> One unfortunate characteristic of the dominant [North] American culture is that we are trained to think that we can and should avoid [pain] (and hence, suffering). (Faiver et al., 2001, p. 62)

The found poetry (October 13, p. 6) has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

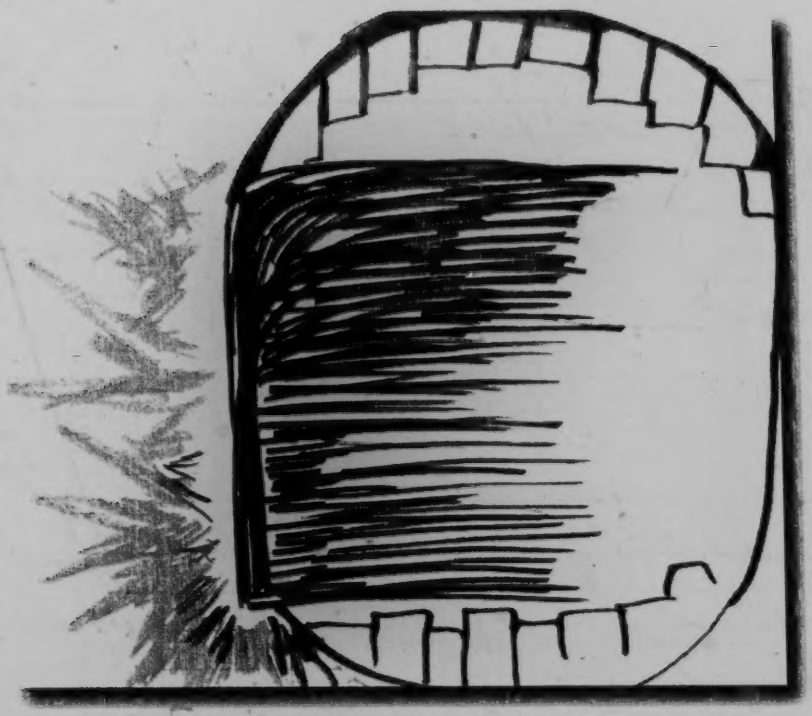
the stuff that you don't have any
control over you don't have any
control there are some
things out there that you don't have
any control over
(January 27, p. 2)

she could no longer speak without the dog howl of fear rising
she gained altitude if tears surfacing on her body counted
she learned to weep here and there at any moment
not enough tears would last out the year

in response, others were kind or defensive. the fearful gained altitude advising:
don't worry or
that will teach you for speaking out or
now maybe you'll know when not to risk dissent or
when you're gone, we're the ones who will have to pick up the pieces.....
.....
.....

pieces?
(Williamson, 1992, pp. 27-28)

a different
kind of fear
the extreme end
fear for your life
(October 13, p. 7)



bombarded by noise yelling the
black wall grey wall glassed
partition you can't really see the
person behind the wall but you can
hear loud big mouth and the yellow
it just felt good the wall he built around
himself the wall I couldn't penetrate no
one could the yellow there's hope so much
pain so much pain lashing lashing out
(October 13, p. 14)

Pain can be a trickster: the place where the pain is felt may not be the place where the trauma is located. (Burns et al, 1999, p. xix)

in what ways are fear and pain
constructed experiences?
(May 12, p. 2)

we're told not to meet alone with
our students you could be accused of saying or

doing something to the student harassment cases by parents have
quadrupled that adds to
this ethos of fear
(October 13, pp. 7, 8)

an autistic
boy trashed the room had to refer him to a
hospital fear I don't know how you
deal with autism not knowing not
understanding that's a fear
(January 27, p. 20)

we don't have the power we don't have a lot to say
often about a situation people have power over us
that's creating fear within us you're
strangled because you can't
often change those things
(May 12, p. 2)

those ads No Fear this
undercurrent of deny deny deny
(January 27, p. 7)

She has this fear that she has no names that she has many names that she doesn't know her names She has this fear that she's an image that comes and goes clearing and darkening the fear that she's the dreamwork inside someone else's skull She has this fear that if she takes off her clothes shoves her brain aside peels off her skin that if she drains the blood vessels strips the flesh from the bone flushes out the marrow She has this fear that when she does reach herself turns around to embrace herself a lion's or witch's or serpent's head will turn around swallow her and grin She has this fear that if she digs into herself she won't find anyone that when she gets "there" she won't find her notches on the trees the birds will have eaten all the crumbs She has this fear that she won't find the way back (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 65)

looking at what
fear is and giving it a name

looking at what
fear is and giving it a name
(May 12, p. 2)

v.

being homeless

hanging on to dust cobwebs not
cleaning up the house letting
everything sit and pile up like the
garbage in the sink with the
garburetor that doesn't work it's
all piling up and the man I'm trying
to impress is looking past me but the
man is me and the I he's looking past
is the me that's stuck in my joints and
the stiffness of my wrist as I try to write

(I see little tiny green flies on the
counter and think to myself that
the house is infested)

coming home from vacations lots of times I
wonder what's going to
be on the front of my garage this week we
threw a kid out kicked him out of my office
he's in for assault with a weapon robbery
with a weapon and I'm thinking
I'll be coming home and
this guy will be on my front lawn
(April 28, p. 8)

I went to a meeting at the board office and
I'm just sitting there from our board office
you can see our school
someone had done vandalism on the wall (at
the school) *Mrs. K. is a f-ing witch*
we're talking it was really heavy and then I
look over and—
(April 28, p. 8)

how do other people perceive you how does
it look from the outside at first it was eggs
what a mess we have cedar siding on our
house we were out there scrubbing
for a long time we're pissed off but besides
that what do the neighbors think? we kept it
quiet kept it to ourselves it's
a source of shame really
(April 28, p. 8)

it's one thing when it happens on school
property it's another when it happens at your
home that's a different ball game it changes
it becomes personal then
there is no place to go
no place to be safe
(April 28, p. 8)

houses always stand as
a metaphor for ourselves
a house being
mucked about with
abused
(April 28, p. 5)

it's a safety net and
a prison too
you retreat into it to
keep yourself safe you
can't go out there

you don't have any rules to
live by you thought you
were safe but
you're not
(April 28, p. 5)

The concept of house, dwelling, home is one that appears and reappears in Irigaray's writing. For her, the 'house' is the male symbolic, a safe haven for him. Women, however, are "in exile, unhoused in male sexuality, male discourse, and male society" (Whitford, 1991, p. 150). The house of our phallogocentric culture is one created out of fear, the denial of her as the some-place of birth. Woman is his orginary home—and his unrequited desire to return to her results in language, a symbol system in which he immerses himself: "unmitigated mourning for intrauterine nest, elemental homesickness that man will seek to assuage through his work as builder of worlds, and notably of the dwelling which seems to form the essence of his maleness: language" (1993b, p. 127). She says too that language holds the subject in a net "that secures him without realizing it. . . which he believes he controls but which controls him. . . . The subject is ignorant or uncomprehending of language's ability to generate, to procreate symbols" (1993c, p.

133). Her investigations of at least three languages, English, French, and Italian, research centering on the words of women and men in daily situations, in the context of therapy, and in 'test situations' reveal some sexed aspects of discourse (Irigaray, 1993f, 1996, pp. 69-78, 79-92; Schwab, 1998, pp. 84-88). She notes that, in French, "the masculine is always dominant in syntax. . . which erases the feminine " and that "this has an impact on the way subjectivity is experienced and the way it is expressed in and by discourse" (1993f, pp. 30-31). Also, what is neutral or impersonal is expressed in the masculine (p. 31, 1994b, p. 166, 1996, pp. 69-78). The masculine masquerades as the universal in language as in other aspects of the symbolic, and effectively erases the feminine. She is cancelled out—and so, therefore, is another way of being&knowing for both of them.

> It's not that we have a territory of our own; but their fatherland, family, home, discourse, imprison us in enclosed spaces where we cannot keep on moving, living as ourselves. Their properties are our exile. Their enclosures, the death of our love. Their words, the gag upon our lips. (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 212)

She is ensconced within his house, without a subjectivity that can be expresssed symbolically. "Homelessness within the very home itself," Grosz notes, "the containment of women within a dwelling place that they did not build, nor was even built *for* them, . . . the space of duty, of endless and infinitely repeatable chores that have no social value or recognition, the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and the erasure of the self" (1995, p. 122). Containment. Imprisonment. An ambiguous and contradictory space to be. Irigaray calls for women to create a language, a subjectivity, a home of their own.[1]

she wakes from a fitful sleep walks
around the house it is 2 am or thereabouts
a June evening cool calm quiet she goes
downstairs to the living room as she always does
when she wakes in the night it is her
place to think to stare out at the night sky the street
the streetlights the houses across the way but tonight
on entering the living room she is
disoriented that feeling you get when something is

wrong something is amiss the front window is it
broken? no. but white marks are all
across it her heart pounds suddenly
very awake she races to the front window looks out
her flower garden destroyed pansies
pulled out by the roots shades of purple all
over the sidewalk a sidewalk full of dirt and
green and purple and those marks on the window
words? they're backwards to her what do
they say? she can't remember now
or can she?
(April 28, p. 3)

and you're crying white lines
the word BITCH
your image now to the people
who live around.
(April 28, p. 6)

> you're walking down the hallway thinking
> okay does everybody in this school except
> me know who this is? is it you? is it you? is
> it you? or I saw you do this or that—maybe
> it is you how can you teach when you can't
> trust people? and it got to the point where
> whenever we were away from the house
> we'd come back and we'd think is something
> going to be wrong? is something going to
> have happened to our house?
> (April 28, p. 7)

the remnants of what
people had left death
weird and bizarre they
were right there but more importantly
they'd come inside left their marks and
where were they? what
was going to happen after that?
(April 28, p. 5)

when you walked down the stairs it was
peaceful quiet pink in my mind pink represents
safety I had to physically cut this paper because I
think of the barrier between what was and suddenly
within a split second something happens changes
your whole perception the perception that you have
from inside and the perception that it gives from
outside but what clouds this whole issue is the
confusion the questions that it brings
confusion pain darkness
(April 28, p. 6)

the inside is no longer pristine
comfortable cozy a haven suddenly
there is a not a great deal of differentiation between
in and out
(April 28, p. 5)

suddenly there is a not a great deal of differentiation between in and out

> Our depth is the thickness of our body, our all touching itself. Where top and bottom, inside and outside, in front and behind, above and below are not separated, remote, out of touch. Our all intermingled. Without breaks or gaps. (Irigaray, 1985a, p. 213)

Irigaray's descriptions of the female body "where top and bottom, inside and outside, in front and behind, above and below are not separated" (1985a, p. 213) and as a "half-open threshold," "lips that are strangers to dichotomy, pressed against each other but without any possibility of suture" (1994b, p. 175) problematizes an outside/inside dualism. The metaphor of female physiology provides a space for reconceptualizing another way of being&knowing where such distinctions cannot be clearly delineated. The female sexed body is a paradox—a space for those invited, and a passageway for birth, for love—but also an always-open space that can be invaded, is unsafe, open to intruders (see Whitford, 1991, pp. 159-160).

the text searches back through her files and finds stuff she has buried surfaces it again some questions what are the implications of maintaining the illusion of outside/inside—a variation on the public/private binary—where the inside the private is mythologized as a

safe space to be? where the house the home stands as ultimate symbol of the private a space of safety? but is it? (when do we say that the emperor has no clothes?)

Day (2001, p. 17) reminds us that although rapes most frequently occur inside the home and are perpetrated by men who are known to the victim a commonly held belief is that such violence happens outside in the night and is initiated by strangers in such a story the safety of the home the inside what is private is kept intact she is held in place (under protection)

but who is the protector? (and what is the flip side of having to be protected? she-who-can-not-look after-herself)

In her dream, she is in a dentist's office. Her teeth have been bothering her, and she wants a dentist to fix them. The dentist takes her into the main office. He has his arm around her like a lover; she has buried her head in his shoulder. You can only see part of the side of her face. She doesn't want to look at the women in the office. She hides. He protects her. The women are all dressed alike, in the same pastel-colored outfits. Their hair is all cut the same. She can tell they don't like her. One, in particular, glares at her hatefully. She knows that this woman was the last to be in the place that she is in now. It's obvious. She hides in his shoulder and knows that this protection will not, can not last. For now, she is hiding. She sees that one of the women is pregnant.[2]

> To establish and maintain relations with oneself and with the other, space is essential. Often women are confined to the inner spaces of their womb or their sex insofar as they serve procreation and male desire. It's important for them to have their own outer space, enabling them to go from the inside to the outside of themselves, to experience themselves as autonomous and free subjects. . . .
>
> Learn not always to follow the same path, which doesn't mean to dissipate your energies, but rather to know how to circulate from outside to inside, from inside to outside. (Irigaray, 1993e, pp. 48-49)

suddenly there is not a great deal of differentiation between inside and outside the inside is no longer pristine comfortable cozy a haven they'd come inside left their marks a house being mucked about with abused

Irigaray notes repeatedly that concepts of space and time must be conceptualized differently, renamed as well, for the acknowledgement of *two* to take place (see for example, Irigaray, 1994b, Whitford, 1991, pp. 152, 155; 1994). *She* cannot be incorporated into a masculine sense of space and time—for her experience is different. Her maternal body is the base for his being, his subjectivity. Ironically, she is the place from which he emerges, a place of non-place for herself. "The mother-woman is used as

a kind of envelope by man in order to help him set limits to things" (Irigaray, 1994b, p. 169; see also, Whitford, 1991, p. 155). An exploitation laced with fear, the need to hold her where she is in space (as mother-woman, not as woman) so as not to disrupt his subjectivity—in a place, a space not her own, not of her own creation.

> The mother woman remains the *place separated from its 'own' place,* a place deprived of a place of its own. She is or ceaselessly becomes the place of the other who cannot separate himself from it. Without her knowledge or volition, then, she threatens by what she lacks: a 'proper' place. She would have to envelop herself, and do so at least twice: both as a woman and as a mother. This would entail a complete change in our conception of time and space. (Irigaray, 1994b, p. 169)

Young (1989) describes feminine experience of the body in space and notes that she is often enclosed, encloses herself in a double gesture—one of protection, enclosing a confined and safe space around her while also being positioned in space as object—at once subject and object. A subject&object whose intention, whose interaction with space and the world around her is limited, fragile, uncertain, confined—and contradictory.

the house a comfy home cottage with
the flowers growing up flowers

being chopped off they're headless
now they're all on the sidewalk
the window pane as a barricade between you
being able to go out and do something about
this it's a safety net but it's a prison too
you retreat into it to keep yourself safe but
you can't go out there you can't go out and
get this person

you don't have any rules
to live by you thought you were safe
but you're not
(April 28, pp. 5-6)

just protecting your own
personal space that whole idea of the
boundaries and stuff we don't talk with
the students about we don't even think
about you just think oh well you just
go out and do this job but it isn't like that
teaching is a very vulnerable thing
public it's a public act
(April 28, p. 9)

A contradictory relationship to space, the space of her own body, her self. Both Young (1989) and Irigaray link their discussions of space to concepts of immanence and transcendence. How woman has been linked to immanence, connected to nature, relegated to the lower aspect of the nature/spirit split because of her cycles, the changeability of her body, and her capacity to give birth. The masculine, by contrast, is associated with transcendence, the spiritual, traditionally that which has been split from its ground (see, for example, Whitford, 1991, p. 149-151, 154). Young (1989) describes transcendence as the body moving out into space with intention, "pure fluid action, the continuous calling forth of capacities which are applied *to* the world" (italics added, p. 59)—something not possible in feminine bodily existence. Her movements are inhibited, small, scribed within a limited space, and often fragmented and disjointed in that only part of the body is involved in a gesture rather than the body as an integrated whole. She inhabits a paradoxical relationship to her body, to space. She is at once an experiencing

subject who must act in the world, move her body out into space, be transcendent to some degree—and also the object of a movement. Young writes:

> Women have the tendency to take up the motion of an object coming *toward* them as coming *at* them. . . . Women tend to have a latent and sometimes conscious fear of getting hurt, which we bring to a motion. That is, [in] feminine bodily existence. . . the woman takes herself as the object of the motion rather than its originator. (1989, p. 61)

Young observes too that women move their bodies in space, small, protected spaces with timid, uncertain movements, because of "original doubt in our body's capacity," a phenomenon that she intuits as linked to "the general lack of confidence that we frequently have about our cognitive or leadership abilities" (1989, p. 67). Irigaray contends that to inscribe her own subjectivity, she must create her own 'axis,' her own way of *moving between* heaven and earth (Irigaray, 1994b, p. 174; Whitford, 1991, p. 150, 152, 160;1994a). Of integrating, perhaps rewriting, what has been described as transcendent, immanent. Space and time must be reconceptualized. Her experience acknowledged. Resymbolized.

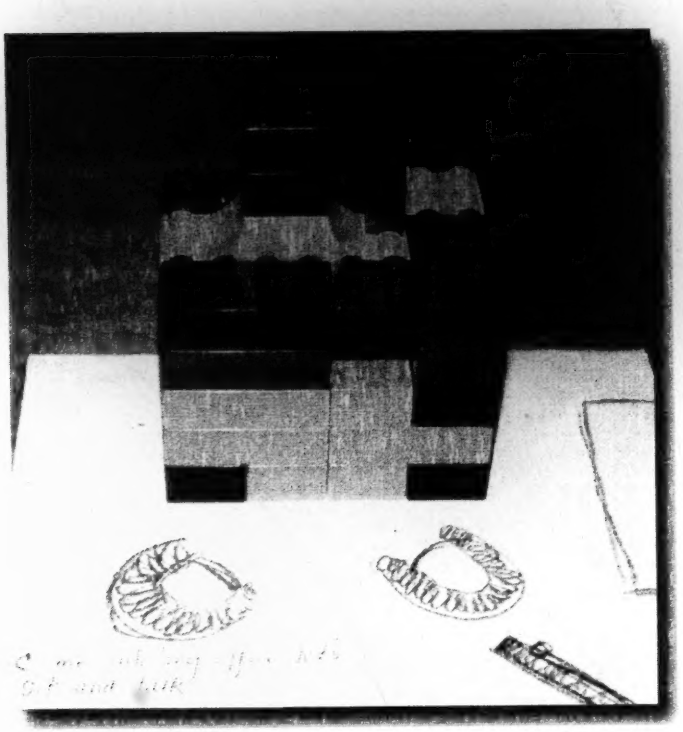
a safety net and a prison too—what are her investments in staying where she is? in the house not going out? the safety the comfort of not-being—of submitting to what is can she create live in a house of her own?

***

I had been anticipating our meeting all[3]
week sometimes finding myself staring
at the ceiling wide awake at night eyes wide open
remembering the cold steel blue eyes the anger and
the hate leveled at me I thought to myself well
should I be changing my phone number or buying a
new car or an old car an old beater to come to
school the gaze and the aggression and the words
echoing through out the office yellow the constable
walks in I smile weakly he's gone we've just told
him he's out he's a loose cannon he could be
anywhere in the school right now exhaustion I felt
drained like a weary boxer leaving the ring knowing

I hadn't won no one had won questions could I have
done something different? could we
have done something different?
(October 13, pp. 6-7)

the blue the cold and the aggression I
kept on seeing images of being eaten
like bait like fish like a worm
(October 13, p. 19)



(I didn't know how to use blocks)

you didn't know what it was going to be like for you
afterwards with every other student that comes in with
problems so I wrote:

Come into my office. Let's sit and talk.

this is how I would feel after that sort of welcoming but
how welcoming is welcoming and how
protective is protective?

and a little opening on the side just a teeny one
sort of a welcoming flag I'm here! but
how do you feel?
hiding in a tank
it looks kind of friendly
but how comfortable is
comfortable after that?

this is how you went down the corridors
afterwards telescope
looking around corners
(October 13, p. 11)

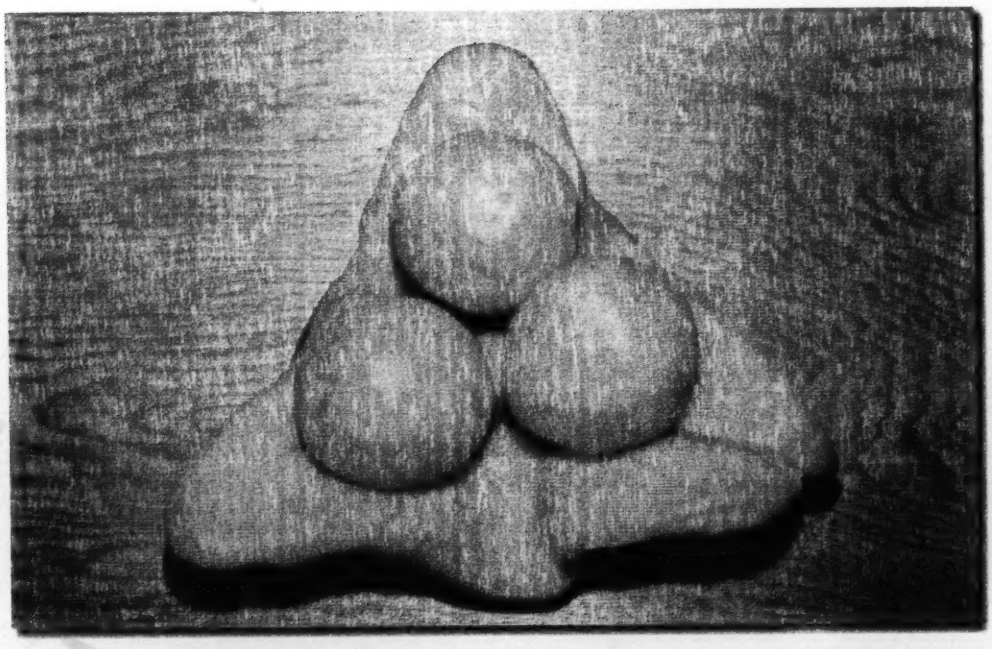
The found poetry (October 13, pp. 11-12) and the spheres image has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

Walsh, S. (2003). Experiences of Fear and Pain in Teaching: A Collaborative Arts-Based Inquiry. In A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (pp. 164 -178). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

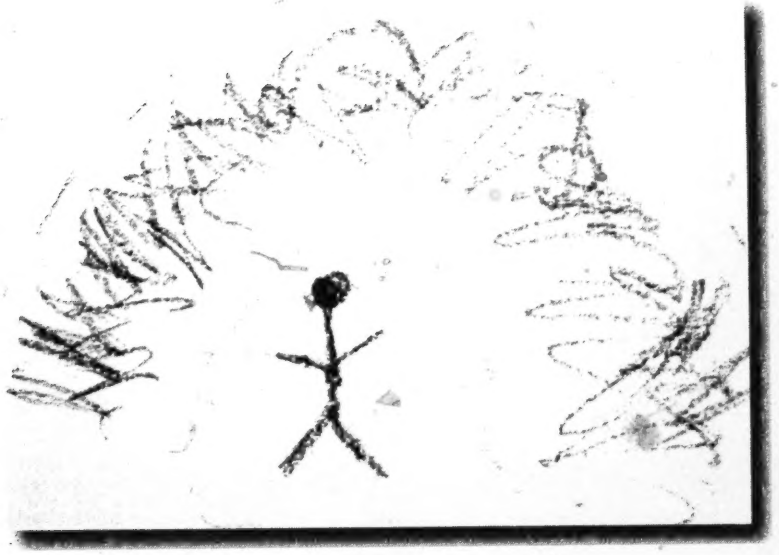
(this is interactive I didn't
know quite how to do this I
just visualized it I was
trying to get it to be soft I

wanted it to be longer and
have these runways

and I needed to blend
the clays and I thought well
that would mess up the colors—
I can't do that)
(October 13, p. 11)



your line where your perceived personal
space is and basically you have the feeling that
when you leave work your home is your
castle you leave work behind and
when you go home it doesn't affect you
you don't have your phone number
listed as a teacher things like that because
you don't want to be phoned at home by
kids the breaks in it the breaks and the orange
represents your fear and the red is the beating of
your heart and the blue is where you knew
your personal space of safety was but you don't
know quite where it is now and where it is
going to form again or how much
you have after that
(April 28, pp. 4-5)



***

the confusion the questions that it brings confusion pain darkness

the confusion of being not-place homeless fusion con-fusion where are the boundaries? how does one feel safe? grounded? a place from which to act? not only is she not-place homeless she also encloses envelops others in the space she's been assigned fears for them

it never struck me before the
downfall of having
a child in the same school
(October 13, p. 8)

or even your child in the same
city we're in a small area and
our name is fairly uncommon
(October 13, p. 8)

I don't think I'd ever live
in the town where I
teach again
(October 13, p. 8)

last year I had a loud discussion with a
female student who had actually been removed
from school a couple of weeks before for beating up
another female student and we were having this
loud discussion about the fact that she was given a
failing grade the students were around and these
students are friends of my daughter's and after she
stormed out I was sitting there and they said maybe
we'll keep an eye on Caroline this week just to
make sure that this person doesn't come around
for me it wasn't a big deal I could
handle this girl but suddenly my
daughter was put into a situation where she could be
injured and luckily luckily I had some students who were
nice big boys they could follow my daughter around and
make sure she was safe for me
(October 13, p. 8)

the text wants to note how many times the writer has written in the margins crossed things out typed and deleted her thoughts about the glaring lack of agency in all this she doesn't seem to know what to do with it

I'm lucky that I have boys and two of them
play hockey because my sons are known as
hockey players and that has helped when they've
come to the school and the two oldest are quite tall
and if the students see me with my sons (they're
taller than me) I haven't had any problems a lot of
my students we see them at the rink but that fear of
somebody doing something to your child that would
make me quit that would definitely make me quit
because you can look after yourself but if your
children are on the front line
that would make me quit and it's definitely not
something they teach you at university
(October 13, p. 8)

I had a student from this university come
to my house once she didn't like my marking
she was absolutely furious standing on my front step
I opened my door and she started screaming
I had little kids at the time they were about four and

six and I was scared for them because
she was out of her mind
(October 13, p. 9)

I can remember my first
year of teaching I had a child who was
obviously being abused at home we reported
her to Social Services I was
teaching a grade 7 class one day and
the child's mother came into my classroom drunk
walked right into the school and started
screaming at me I was so scared for those kids she
was between me and the door so
there was no way I could get help nothing
I could do
(October 13, p. 14)

the confusion the questions that it brings confusion pain darkness

The confusion of being of being homeless, of not having a safe space is part of the reconceptualization of space-time, the renaming, that Irigaray directs us toward in eschewing fusion, incorporation into the masculine universal, and thereby opening into two. We need to acknowledge another way of being, of existing—a space-time she describes variously as mucous, threshold, espacement, angels—all mediating images—spaces between. Mucous, for example, is of the body, neither solid nor liquid, changeable in shape, more tactile than visual, often hidden, interior (Whitford, 1991, p. 163).

home is by the
water like in December at Crescent
Beach with the waves high and
crashing and the sky grey and
low the sound me
just meeting the waves with the edges of
my new boots sometimes
being surprised putting
my fingers in the
water licking them
salt home the smell that
goes far into my body and

makes me feel that suddenly
I want to breathe deeper

and last night I was
remembering the time I
went back to Victoria where
I lived as a child and
how I walked into the
ocean at Beacon Hill
Park couldn't speak

while I have often felt unlocated being no place scattered ungrounded I am learning that I can locate myself various teachers continue to show up share the same message sit still close your eyes breathe notice what is happening in your body feel your body breathe notice your breath follow your breath direct your breath and I am located I am someplace I am in my body

I teach to you

a woman trying to escape running
from a man trying to hide in a
museum hiding around corners another
woman around another corner being attacked
trying to escape leave the country trying to
get away but all attempts are hopeless cuts
open wounds that won't stop bleeding gaping
cuts that won't heal the slicing of the skin

a group of men with a huge
painting worth millions
they have stolen from my house
I grab it run down a back alley
hide and run

a memory of being four or five of playing in the yard on Tattersall Drive in Victoria how we dug in the sandbox with spoons from the kitchen (and our mom could never find them again never had enough spoons) and how we played with garter snakes catching them in the hedge and winding them around our wrists and necks like jewellry how as the eldest I had to look out for Sandy the baby who always seemed to be somewhere else in the yard somewhere different from where Laurel and I were playing and how I always had to check on her

and I think of my mom how she says that she was ironing from the time she was five could barely see over the ironing board how she felt responsible for the cleaning of the house for her brothers while her mom sat on the couch and smoked cigarettes rolled from a can of Black Cat tobacco a golden yellow can and read book after book drinking coffee beer

and how when my girls were outside playing in a yard that was not fenced in I asked Casey to make sure that Erin did not wander out of the yard that I wanted to do some thing in the house and then remembered and so went outside to watch Erin myself

> Our [Christian theological] tradition presents and represents the radiant glory of the mother, but rarely shows us a fulfilled woman. And it forces us to make murderous choices: either mother (given that a *boy* child is what makes us truly mothers) or woman (prostitute and property of the male). We have no female trinity. But, as long as woman lacks a divine made in her image she cannot establish her subjectivity or achieve a goal of her own. . . . If she is to become woman, if she is to accomplish her female subjectivity, woman needs a god who is the figure for the perfection of *her* subjectivity. (Irigaray, 1993d, pp. 63-64)

> [Inanna] is the borderlands the liminal
> the intermediate regions energies that cannot
> be contained or made certain secure she is
> transition borders places of intersection and
> crossing over that imply creativity change
> flexible playful never certain for long
> (the feminine beyond the merely maternal)
> (from Perera, 1981, p. 16)

Irigaray notes the problems inherent in using motherhood as a focal point for finding, creating female images of the divine that allow women to enter this crucial realm of the symbolic. Motherhood, though rich in possibilities, can also be disempowering. As unsituated, homeless herself, woman, ironically, in the role of 'mother' provides a place for man, a place from which his subjectivity arises, a sort of necessary ground from which to create himself (Irigaray, 1994b, p. 169, 1993a; see also Fuss, 1989, pp. 70-71). *She* exists in an & space—between interior and exterior, heaven and earth—a threshold, an interval, a mucous. As yet undefined. Something that sets limits for him. In this place of non-place, she is threatening to him. Her connection to the divine is mediated, always.

> In many traditions, the god is engendered by means of a woman, means that are not simply the practical ones of procreation. Women take part in the divine becoming, in the engendering of "God." But that mediation is often forgotten. Women serve the apparition of the god but do not appear themselves as *divine.* As *mothers* of God, as *servants* of the Lord, yes. As consorts of the god, as incarnations of the divinity, no. (Irigaray, 1993a, pp. 106-107)

Inscribed within a male universal—spiritually and socially, unable to *become* into her own 'singularity,' she is expected to 'mother' her children according to prescribed ways of being&knowing (see Irigaray, 1996, pp. 19-33): "self-effacement in a family-related role is her civil task" (p. 22). Children are thus taught to *be* in a generic way, not to respect their own 'singularity'—an "erasure within the universal" (p. 26). This is particularly true for daughters, places the mother-daughter relationship on a plane of not-becoming. How can a daughter find ways to inscribe herself when her mother is erased? How does she differentiate herself from the same, a place of not-place? The rewriting of mother-daughter relationships and of relationships among women as well as between women and men is crucial to her coming into her own subjectivity, giving birth to *two* (see Irigaray, 1993e, 1994a, pp. 78-80, 2001; see also Grumet, 1988, pp. 160-163).

Ruether (1983) concurs with Irigaray in cautioning against motherhood as a center for rewriting women's relationship to the divine. She warns against the tendency of many feminist spiritual seekers to appropriate a goddess from a pre-Christian tradition and thereby simply reverse and further entrench existing dualistic thought. It is not enough to simply extract a female deity and revere/romanticize her feminine qualities—those essentialized by existing dualisms (pp. 38-41). Directing our attention to a female 'mother' goddess and away from a 'father' god is not enough—going beyond the notion of 'parent' god/ess is a beginning though (pp. 68-71).

> Feminist theology needs to affirm the God of Exodus, of liberation and new being, but as rooted in the foundations of being rather than as its antithesis. The God/ess who is the foundation (at one and the same time) of our being and our new being embraces both the roots of the material substratum of our existence (matter) and also the endlessly new creative potential (spirit). The God/ess who is the foundation of our being-new does not lead us back to a stifled, dependent self or uproot us in a spirit-trip outside the earth. Rather it leads us to the converted center, the harmonization of self and body, self and other, self and world. (Ruether, 1983, pp. 70-71)

For Irigaray too, the 'parental' relationship—as defined within a single universal—is insufficient for conceiving *two,* finding a different way of being&knowing in the world. Such a relationship signifies a way of being-in-relation-to that is hierarchical, based on

mastery, domination (of the other, of nature), a desire to remain within a limited 'horizon,' the transmission of a set of predetermined ways of being&knowing that are not open to difference—a closed economy (1996, pp. 45-46). Her vision remains that of *two*—of acknowledging female subjectivity and of opening to a more horizontal exchange between, "reciprocal listening" (1996, p. 46).

> *I am listening to you* is to listen to
> your words as something unique
> irreducible especially to my own as
> something new as yet unknown
> which does not mean I comprehend
> you I know you so I do not need to
> listen to you and can even plan a
> future for you no
> I am listening to you as someone and
> something I do not know yet I
> encourage something unexpected to
> emerge I am listening to you
> prepares the way for the
> not-yet-coded for silence a
> space for your becoming
> (from Irigaray, 1996, pp. 116-117)

***

I have for so long felt that teachers are erased in the educational picture I guess this is a way of saying that our subjectivity is not recognized the complexity of our being as teachers not acknowledged but rather collapsed simplified reduced bears no resemblance to our actual work in schools as a researcher interested in experiences of fear and pain I sometimes found it frustrating that the participants' stories their talk and responses would return often to their students conversation circled back vacillated between teacher and student positions sometimes stories and responses highlighted students at times I felt like saying yes but

is this about lack of differentiation? about relationality? about a different way of being-in-relation-to? is it about being overly responsible for everyone else—and not self-responsible? is it simply an indication of the complexity of teaching and how things cannot be separated out as easily as we would like—so we can examine and explain them? (am I trying to make this easy-to-package?)

Being erased. Erasure of the self. A not-being clearly situated, not located anywhere except in relation to others. Unclear boundaries. Lack of differentiation? Boundary-less? Or just a different way of being? Both&and?

Where is she?

I watch the women use their hands
their capable strong hands
to fashion thoughts feelings perceptions
and all I can think of is why? why do children
get so full of pain that they have to lash
out to hurt others and themselves I can almost
feel the pain the black hole where softness
should be sometimes this is too much
pain too much emptiness
focus on the yellow the yellow of
the drawing the yellow of the candle the
yellow of the playdough it brings relief it
brings warmth to ease the pain can they
feel the warmth? will they let the warmth
touch them will they let the yellow
blend away the harshness of their lives?
(October 13, p. 13)

I want to talk about fear
fear of kids that come into our schools
and have so much anger
and they just have it translated to
our kids at home and our lives
(October 13, p. 13)

when you talked about the teacher
and the fear I think our students
sometimes move into that same
situation they're not hidden
in the classroom and they're
having to perform and that's
an uncomfortable
position for them it's
not just the teacher
(August 24, p.4)

the fear that a teacher feels
having to perform and
the student performing
you're only comfortable up to
the level of your knowledge
so if you feel comfortable with
what you know then you feel comfortable
doing something but if you don't feel your
knowledge base is there
you're not comfortable
that's where I think my students are
if they're not comfortable with
speaking in front of the class if they don't
have the knowledge of doing it
then they won't
(August 24, pp.4-5)

A both&and situatedness, a subjectivity that is at once grounded and strongly relational, is crucial to an understanding of female subjectivity. Connection with an immanent divine, realized in creative power that is not external to her (Tomm, 1995, p. 4). King (1993) concurs with both&and situatedness, but also problematizes such a space.

> To accept others and relate to them in a positive manner a person must first accept herself and be truly integrated and centred in herself. A great difficulty arises here because women are in fact too other-centred, that is to say, too self-effacing and self-forgetting rather than concerned with self-determination. Here the ambiguity of the self becomes apparent. Women often suffer low-regard; too often they see their task as one of giving, of self-sacrifice, rather than of fostering their self-esteem and own sense of worth which a person needs for mature relations with others. This difficulty is connected with the whole problem of women's passivity created by the tyranny of gender roles in our society. Too often women have accepted the notion of simply 'being' rather than doing as a rationalization for their exclusion from the actions and decisions of the real world. Superficially this may give the impression of greater self-acceptance and maturity, even of greater religious capacity in women, but at a deeper level it often masks a sense of dependence, insecurity and self-refusal. (p. 79)

where is she?

where am I? nowhere
disappeared forever in
your presence
(from Irigaray, 1992, p. 48)

she is sitting against the locker back against the wall knees
drawn to her chest she's a tall girl and her
white make up black spiked hair and black lipstick seem
like a warning stay away
the black lines drawn out away from her eyes pull
you to look deeper
she says she's written a letter to explain I ask her
where she should be right now she says she's
skipping I read her letter and begin to feel
the pain deeply planted below the disguise of this larger
than life girl I know what I'd do if
this was not a school environment I tell her
I'll connect her to the appropriate agencies ask her if she's
spoken to the school counsellor
a colleague has said that the student's mother is
quite crazy might sue if
if what? if I step outside the boundaries I feel
restricted by in a school setting?
(October 28 p. 9)

was I naïve in thinking it would be possible to separate out the teacher her experiences of fear and pain? am I still stuck in a humanist view of the individual no matter how much I intellectualize subjectivity? everything is all connected of course the pain of the students intertwined with the pain of the teachers and probably vice versa as well we are defined (and erased too?) in relation to others

where is she? does she teach from a not-place? and is that something to accept to acknowledge to explore as another possibility or is it something to rewrite? can it be both at once? I am reminded here of Grumet (1988) and Britzman (1991) their comments about mother as teacher teacher as mother the historical role of women in the profession and the image of the 'good teacher' as selfless

> Like the "good" woman, the "good" teacher is positioned as self-sacrificing, kind, overworked, underpaid, and holding an unlimited reservoir of patience. (Britzman, 1991, p. 5)

she called me a bitch last week told
me to shut up I had to stand there be
calm I'm getting better at doing it
but it's really hard sometimes
(October 28, p. 6)

we had a student in
grade nine punch a first year
teacher in the face
(October 28, p. 6)

Probably the most profound feeling I have as a teacher is that very little value is placed on what I do and on the talents and abilities I bring to my job. This happens time and again when we've been put in positions and circumstances we could not influence—not to mention control. To speak out had never felt empowering (or resulted in change). The devaluing I feel as a teacher is frustrating: my voice is being ignored, subverted, undermined, while other more powerful ones are being heard, acknowledged, accepted. . . .

Two weeks ago I was spit on during hall supervision. Tomorrow I meet with a student who wrote a course evaluation that included an assessment of me as a "smart aleck." (Her parents support her point of view. My administrator's sentiments are still unclear.) Each day, students are outwardly rude, defiant, belligerent, irresponsible. Why do I stay in teaching? (from Connell & Johnston-Kline,1999, pp. 84-86)

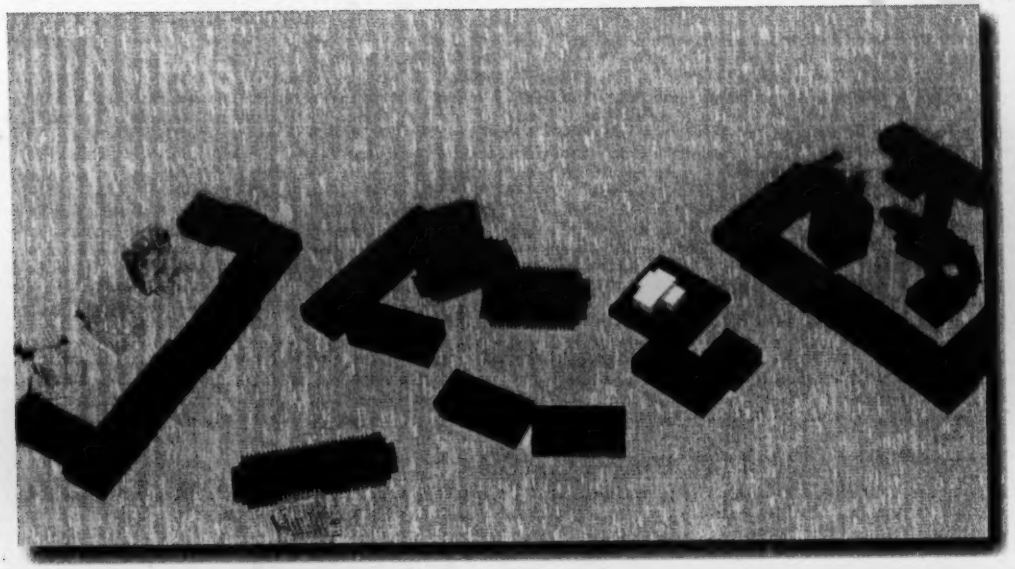
being spat upon
I can't believe that
in a junior high?
I don't teach that age level I would go out of
control I would call the parents and say remove this animal
from my presence if he can't behave he's not my
responsibility or she's not my
responsibility you shouldn't have to but you do
but why? why do they allow that?
under the School Act you have to provide educational opportunity
and let them spit on you? why can't you kick them out?
you work around it but you can't take them out of school
I don't get it
I don't get it either
(October 28, pp. 6-7)

you have all kinds of horrible things happen but
you deal with it you're the adult you deal with it
like the adult (I must have suspended sixty kids in
four years) but it's not easy you often get kids
running off you say stop and they keep running and
they're gone you ask them to do something and they
turn around and say no
(October 28, p. 7)

***

I am listening to you is to listen to
your words as something unique
irreducible especially to my own as
something new as yet unknown
which does not mean I comprehend
you I know you so I do not need to
listen to you and can even plan a
future for you no
I am listening to you as someone and
something I do not know yet I
encourage something unexpected to
emerge I am listening to you
prepares the way for the
not-yet-coded for silence a
space for your becoming
(from Irigaray, 1996, pp. 116-117)

these are kids that we might label
thinking that they're the same but
when you look at their shapes they're
really quite different
(November 16, p. 13)



I made everything within
really very different but
we've put them within the
same boundaries treated
them the same this is the desk
for the teacher (or whoever is
doing this kind of
categorizing boxing
people in)
(November 16, p. 13)

it sort of simplifies things for us doesn't it

how we make judgments
about people quickly without knowing you
look in a classroom and you think ok that
guy's a troublemaker I can tell
got that look
(November 16, p. 13)

***

To Casey, age sixteen, just before she leaves for Europe

I need to pull my words around me this letting go this acceptance this standing at the edge of the void I have been alternately ready to leap and fighting to hold onto the edge being a mom letting go of you and the illusion that I can make things right for you is the hardest thing I've ever done

seeing you my beautiful sixteen year old all swollen in pain from having wisdom teeth removed worrying about immunizations the ones you need to have when travelling to Portugal Spain Morocco polio typhoid tetanus measles hepatitis A which are recommended and which are only marginal? and then infection from the damn teeth and not being able to do anything and moms get to learn that they can't protect you always and keep you safe from everything they get to see the limits of their humanness and they have no choice but to accept it and let go

the limits of humanness and suffering where mom leaves off and faith acceptance begin here I have been doing all this reading and thinking about I and Thou the silence before the Thou the listening and I have been railing against philosophers saying how does this realize itself in life in breath and now I partly know

a tight knot in my gut shoulders toes a feeling of nausea and food that goes through me tears that can't quite be cried and then can't stop all kinds of worries fears a part of me that shuts out belief faith all that I have worked so hard for

I can't help wondering in this moment if I have really seen you as separate from me if I have listened closely enough you have so often surprised me like when you wanted to go backpacking in the Rocky Mountains for a week at thirteen years old how you saved up all your money and went when I said I wouldn't pay for it if I have listened I have never felt your separateness like I do today a wrenchingness that I can't seem to yield to and all this makes me wonder what is love and what has it been?

> *I love to you* means I maintain a relation of indirection to you. I do not subjugate or consume you. I respect you (as irreducible). I hail you: in you I hail. I praise you: In you I praise. I give thanks: to you I give thanks for . . . .
>
> The "to" is the sign of non-immediacy, of mediation between us. . . . The "to" is the site of non-reduction of the person to the object. . . . The "to" is also a barrier against alienating the other's freedom in my subjectivity, my world, my language.
>
> *I love to you* thus means: I do not take you for a direct object by revolving around you. It is, rather, around myself that I have to revolve in order to maintain the *to you* thanks to the return to me. . . . Hence I do not

return to me by way of: I wonder if I am loved. That would result from an introverted intentionality, going toward the other so as to return ruminating, sadly and endlessly, over solipsistic questions in a sort of cultural cannibalism. (Irigaray, 1996, pp. 109-110)

I teach to you?

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have an ear into the curriculum
I'm always aware stay
focused you're supposed to

you get the parents asking what
you're doing in the classroom and I always
feel as if I'm up here going yada yada yada
to the students and they all have to sit in their
desks listen to me and there's no opinions just
do as you're told follow rules get through this and then
you'll have your mark I would like to have more of
what I have with my 16's where we can we have
growth individuality we've become a
family connected to each other a core group
I want them all to come out and
feel comfortable talk it's a living
process not to be a yada yada person but
to be there just as
a medium they go through
(July 22, pp. 13-14)

she picks sweetgrass in a field overgrown with
grass flowers yellow violet white
searches carefully among the roots for purple the smell
looks everywhere no big clumps just a strand here there
not knowing which is the mother plant where to make an offering
lets tobacco fly in the wind breathes silently her prayers
slowly gathers hands full sits in warmth the sun
braids bodymindspirit blue clearing wide above

she used to be afraid of the wind but now
she lets it blow around through her
stands in the river on slippery rocks scoops
cool water in hands wind
goose pimple skin arms legs

she used to lie awake at night in the
campground curled tight in her sleeping
bag fists toes clenched listening
to the flap of the tent unzipping window peering
out into the night wondering if
lightning would strike if hail was in the clouds

vi.

what is internal&external

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after all I was the
assistant principal in charge of
student behaviour I couldn't
let their disruptions spill
out into the hall
(October 28, p. 12)

you're a teacher you
should be able to teach them
(October 28, p. 16)

after all as teachers couldn't
we teach everything?
(October 28, p. 13)

and always I looked to
blamed myself what could I
have done differently?
(October 28, p. 13)

> The collective discussion of personal problems and conflicts, often previously understood as the results of personal inadequacies and neuroses, leads to a recognition that what have been experienced as personal failings are socially produced conflicts and contradictions shared by many women in similar social positions. This process of discovery can lead to a rewriting of personal experience in terms which give it social, changeable causes. (Weedon, 1997, p. 33)

what are you
doing next? are you
going to work on your
masters? are you going to
join this group of people who are
working towards administration? what are
the other things you're doing?
(January 27, p. 10)

you have to be all things to all
people you have to be all
things to all people
(March 3, p. 11)

could I have
done something different? could we have
done something different?
(October 13, p. 6)

what could I have done
differently? what did I do
wrong? that shield we build around
ourselves that image we create
(March 3, p. 10)

are we supposed to
do this the first year? are we
supposed to take on all the
extra-curricular activities?
(March 3, p. 14)

had I explained enough? had I
given my students enough to
get them going? were they feeling
lost and not understanding? maybe I
hadn't given them enough direction
(July 22, p. 16)

> When the process by which we come to know or the conceptual ordering we employ is taken for granted or is never known consciously, and instead is attributed to the nature of things, our capacity to theorize critically about the vulnerabilities and possibilities of our conditions and practices is diminished. . . . We, in turn, are diminished as we take on self-blame for not conforming to what experience dictates. This blame places undue pressure and undue culpability upon the individual. (Britzman, 1992, p. 31)

she observes her extreme avoidance about writing this section skips over it time and time again thinking to herself that it will not take much work that maybe it is not as important as some of the other sections this has gone on for weeks and weeks maybe longer she gets up from the computer eats chocolate looks out the window returns to her seat sends e-mails to her friends takes books off the shelf looks up relevant quotes walks away again

(it's like there is part of the text that is lurking around the edges looking for ways to edge itself in and the writer is trying to write largely pretend she's in control keep it out)

she can't help noticing some of what surfaces how often and how unrelentingly the women in the group internalize what happened in their teaching how they blame themselves find themselves lacking and how do they go on? so often in teaching she has heard the admonishment not to take things personally or you won't survive but what does this mean? (even this advice has the ring of sorting things out for yourself an assumption that somehow you can and should the sense that as an individual one can figure things out and maybe it is that sense of the 'individual' that needs to be examined)

I was late for class that day I got
held up I should have said no I'll get
back to you instead of standing there

thinking about this stupid book list for
next year (I didn't know if
I had a job next year)
(July 22, p. 16)

I shouldn't feel like that we're supposed to
be colleagues we're supposed to
work together
(July 22, p. 18)

I'm supposed to
be the teacher I'm
supposed to be in
control I'm not
(July 22, p. 18)

I dig down deep inside myself for
something that the Teachers' Union Code
of Ethics says I should feel and I don't feel it. . .
I don't want to hate anybody are they
trying to make me hate them? why would they
do that? I hate that

HATE HATE HATE HATE HATE HATE HATE

it's a word teachers don't allow themselves to use
(from Doran, 1999, pp. 30-32)

I know this is not
what I should be
feeding them not what
I should be
giving them
(November 16, p. 10)

Assumptions surrounding the 'individual' are problematic. The humanist view of the latter as autonomous, rational, able to be self-conscious, and existing over time is

indicative of a particular way of being&knowing that is considered universal, non gendered. Supposedly one can, through intellect and volition—and in isolation—come to interpret what is and subsequently act in the world. Further, one is responsible for doing so. Such a view perpetuates an illusion of localized power and authority within the individual and treats as transparent beliefs about knowledge and how particular ways of being&knowing come to be validated and others not. An ideal standard is set, one which necessarily encloses people within their free will and intellectual capacities.

Britzman (1986, 1991, 1992) elucidates cultural myths relative to teaching, some of which feature a humanist individual. Through naming the myths, she interrogates some commonly held beliefs—conflated and two-dimensional views of teaching and teachers—that serve to oversimplify and overpersonalize what it means to teach. The myths of the 'rugged individual' and of the 'teacher as self-made,' for example, center around one who can "[overcome] any inherited circumstance through sheer ingenuity and individual effort" in a context where "social interdependency is understood as a weakness [and] a particular brand of autonomy becomes a strength" (1991, p. 236). Further:

> That teachers are self-made [means] that answers must come only from within and if they do not, then it is an individual problem. Such a . . . perspective can only result in isolation and self-blame. (1991, p. 168)

Closely related to the idea of the rugged individual and the teacher as self-made is the belief that 'everything depends on the teacher'—another myth that centralizes the teacher as locus of control and holder of knowledge and that effectively erases the learner as active participant in the process (see 1986, p. 451-452; 1991, pp. 111, 168, 223-227). For teachers, and for students, each of these myths ensures that the ways that teaching and learning unfold through social interaction and negotiation are largely unvalidated. A particular view of knowledge and knowing that highlights universal truths and a rational process for attaining them underlines all.

The cultural myths of teachers described above are useful in troubling the experiences of teachers; however, a consideration of sexual difference might help to further extend the interrogation. Shildrick (1997) notes that the humanist view of the subject is underlined

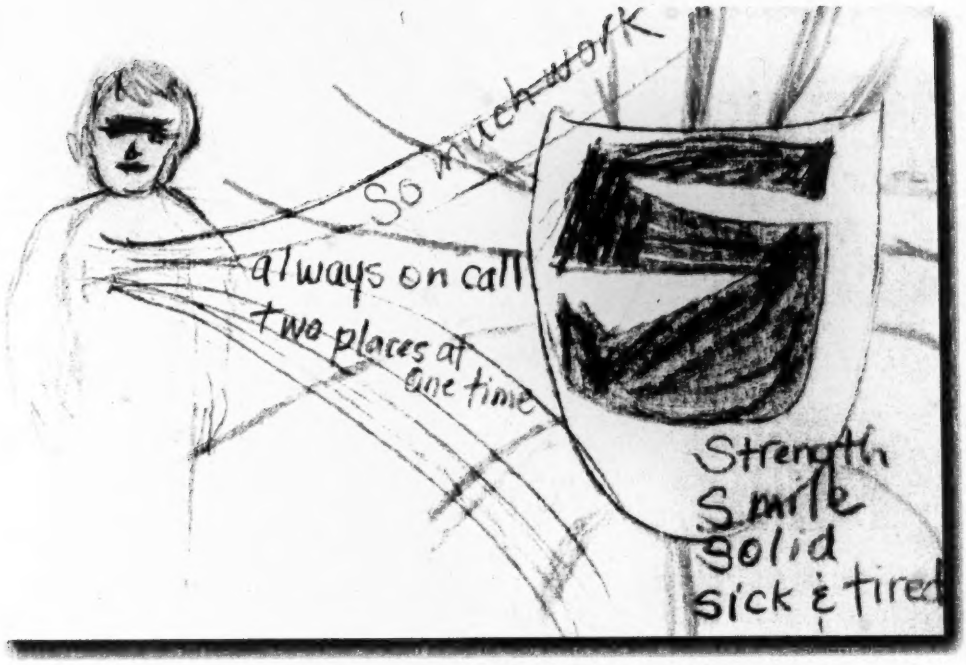
by a view of the individual as defined in male terms and existing within a male epistemology&ontology. Women, in such a context, as Irigaray has already shown us, are effectively excluded. Shildrick writes:

> To be a modern subject . . . is a matter of taking on the ontological status of a man. And to be the same as a man is to be no less than a man. To be different is to fall short; to be not so much woman as not-man; to be the other whose very (non)presence confirms . . . the unity and self-identity of the masculine subject. . . . Women do not set their own standards, but act and react according to the masculine ideal. (1997, p. 147)

The masculine 'ideal,' the culturally acceptable standards so inherent in our ways of being&knowing, remains intact through a series of oppositions that inscribe each other. Irigaray, as we have seen, calls us to consider difference outside such a realm, difference that she believes to be feminine, a way of being&knowing unexpressed in the cultural myths of teaching, though not unfelt by those who are living the experience. It erupts in the cracks and contradictions of what just doesn't seem to explain things adequately, the masculine 'ideal' which, when taken-for granted as 'just the ways things are,' is internalized as self-blame and inadequacy. How else is she to read it, enclosed as she is in her own little space, and unwritten, unacknowledged in the symbolic?

not knowing something or not
being good enough and not
meeting expectations of others and not
having the right answer like there's a right
answer all the time and because I don't have it
it's my fault because I didn't study the right
thing or I didn't look hard enough or
(November 25, p. 9)

we have to get more we have to get
more there's never any end to it
(November 25, p. 9)



what could I have done
differently? what did I do wrong?
(March 3, p. 10)

I was blaming myself blaming
myself somehow I thought I'm drawing this
to myself what about the
stuff that's out there that you don't have any
control over sometimes there are things that are
out there and you don't have any control
over them and they happen there are some
things out there that you don't
have any control over
(January 27, p. 2)

a lot of it comes from
outside places that we take for
granted that we're not even
questioning we don't sit down and

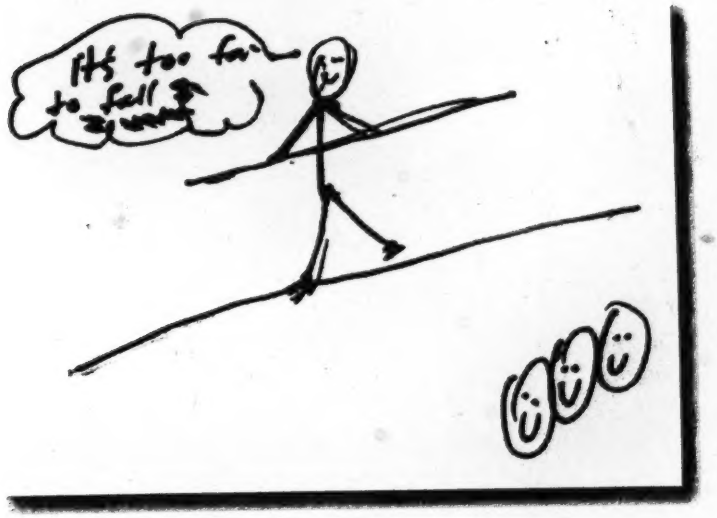
say what do I think are the
expectations of me and where
do they come from?
(March 3, p. 11)

***

a performance the audience all the
people that the person is performing
for she keeps changing positions to
different positions but then where is
she? she's changing colors changing
positions changing colors and
positions for the performance
(August 24, p. 14)

being on a tightrope rocking all of
her peers watching she's confident,
she's smiling she's obviously going

to make the step without falling
while she's thinking it's too far
to fall just one step ahead if
I can do one step ahead no problem
(August 24, p. 13)



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we're very much on show
maybe more so than other
areas where people work I
never felt like I had people
watching me when I worked
in a bank an actor I'm
playing a role
(March 3, p. 8)

Britzman shows how the public (external) imsage of teaching, our "overfamiliarity" with the profession and the resultant belief that "anyone can teach," is at odds with the complexity of teaching and how one must "suppress aspects of the self" as one takes up a teaching performance (1991, pp. 3-4). The public image of teaching, the public arena in which it is carried out and the vulnerability and contradictions involved in actually living the teaching experience contribute daily to divisiveness in the self (Palmer, 1998; Tompkins, 1990). Teachers assume a role that assures the preservation of the school system; the myriad demands, the busyness, and the isolation of their daily work ensure that time and space to reflect and to question are severely limited. The discrepancy between the lived experience of teachers and the role they are expected to play is a significant contradiction that teachers negotiate daily (see, for example, Britzman, 1991, p. 25; 1992, p. 29). Tompkins (1990) outlines a *performance model* of teaching as focused on an external and idealized image of the teacher. She recognized one day that her identity in teaching was tied up in her desire "to show the students how smart [she] was, to show them how knowledgeable [she] was, and to show them how well-prepared [she] was for class" (p. 654). Such a model is predicated on fear.

> Fear is the driving force behind the performance model. Fear of being shown up for what you are: a fraud, stupid, ignorant, a clod, a dolt, a sap, a weakling, someone who can't cut the mustard. . . . Fear of exposure, of being found out, does not have its basis in any real inadequacies either of knowledge or of intelligence on our part, but rather in the performance model itself which, in separating our behaviour from what we really [feel], [creates] a kind of false self. (p. 654)

I absolutely hate disciplining kids I
don't like doing it but I can do it and
I can do a really good job of it just

don't like myself go home beat
myself up feel lousy question
myself wish I hadn't done it
(March 3, p. 10)

I had a hard time this week a young
gentleman that I had to withdraw because of
substance abuse and I was sitting there
thinking I want to really see you and I want
to kick you out I was almost apologizing to
this kid and I knew this was the best thing
for him but the role just sometimes
(March 3, pp. 9-10)

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leading a battle and getting
there ahead she's got strength
and she can smile and she's
solid and she's sick and tired
of doing it but everybody
depends on her
(August 24, p. 13)

work harder try
harder think think think
(August 24, p. 4)

for me anywhere you go anything you
do it's oh this is the teacher or
this is the administrator you can't
you can never let your guard
down ever
I find that tough
(April 28, p. 10)

public Forms: a. 3-6 publyke, 5-7 –ike, ique, 6 –icque, ycke, -yque, 6-7 –icke, *Sc.* –icte, 6-8 –ick, 7 –iq, 6-public. ß. 5 puplik. 7-icke, ique, [ME. *publike, -ique* a. F. public (1311 in Hatz.- Darm.), ad. L. *publicus*, in early L. *poplicus*, f. *poplus* (later *popul-us*) PEOPLE.

> (The change to *publicus* appears to have taken place under the influence of *pubes*, in the sense 'adult men,' 'male population.') (OED)

The public has historically been considered a male domain. What is public is what is 'out there,' that which is assumed to be 'universal,' commonly accepted, for the common good (see Olson, 2002, pp. 40-54). Irigaray (1996) writes, "In the name of [his] alleged universality, he apparently has the right and duty to represent the entire human species in public life" (p. 22)—and, as we have seen, in symbol systems such as language and in images of the divine that are created according to his subjectivity. Difference is conflated, subsumed. Women, while having no choice but to exist within the 'public' and 'universal' as well, are associated with the second term in the opposition, what is private. But what does private mean, what can private mean? And where is the space for what is private in teaching, a performance carried out in public?

while I understand that public and private define each other underwrite each other they are locked in an opposition that is difficult to move outside of how can what is inside and what is outside be muddied? and how would that help us read our teaching experiences differently?

Grumet (1988) relates the history of teaching, how women entered the profession and were expected to carry out a role defined within male parameters and with little sense of agency. They took their role of female nurturer, that which had been defined in the domestic sphere, to the public arena. Little changed.

> Daughters who entered teaching to flee a suffocating domesticity were absorbed by the institutional paternalism that substituted the discipline of the state, of the school day, its language, rituals, and coercion, for the moral responsibility of the family. Women were not asked to create this moral leadership in either the home or the school, but they were expected to be the medium through which the laws, the rules, language, and order of the father, the principal, the employer were communicated to the child. Their own passivity was to provide the model of obedience for the young to emulate. The self-abnegation and submission to universal principles of morality, decorum, and beauty constrained teachers, as they had artists, from developing a style of practice with which they were personally identified and for which they felt personally responsible. (p. 84)

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so where's the time and
where's the place
to be yourself?
(March 3, p. 10)

***

in the underworld Inanna's
corpse on a peg
rotting flesh

above Ninshubur's cries for help
are unheard (no one dares
cross the dark sister) until Enki god
of water creativity wisdom scrapes
dirt from his fingernails that which
defies containment and creates two tiny
beings life-givers who cry moan
rage with Ereshkigal honor what is suffer
with witness blend self&other
blur insideoutside

going to the border
is to begin to
find awareness of separate
being (the place of crossing where
two becomes one and one
becomes two)
(from Perera, 1981, p. 72)

and Ereshkigal being heard gives the
corpse to the life-givers and
transformed reborn Inanna returns above
(angry ruthless now
she searches for one to
take her place
below satisfy the dark
sister restore balance)

vii.

knowing: mucous

The hallway/door image has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

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behind every closed door
where it's quiet and it seems like
everything is in perfect order
somebody's bleeding

you may not see it but
it's coming through that door
out to the hall
(October 28, p. 14)

how do we learn not to
trust ourselves not to be
strong I think that a lot of us
have learned not to be strong inside
ourselves not to resist all those outside
voices to the point where your boundaries
are so confused that all this stuff is always
coming in and then you don't even know
which of it is your expectations
of yourself or what
comes from outside anymore
(March 3, p. 12)

I return to fear. Fear of being inadequate, of not having enough years in the classroom to teach the undergraduates. More experience in teaching school would fix this up, I thought. But it didn't. Working with students in junior high for six more years reinforced the fact that fear and pain is part of life, definitely part of a teaching life for some of us. I realized that when I left the teaching profession for the third time, this time to pursue doctoral studies, that I had lived many stories of fear and pain in teaching, that much of my experience in learning to teach had been hidden, private. Even in a graduate class that centered on the practice of teacher education where we were asked to consider what had shaped us as teachers, even in an environment where I felt reasonably safe to speak of my experiences, there were stories that remained untold. That were silenced out of shame and a deeply felt sense that my shortcomings were my own, and therefore something I had to work harder to overcome.

The relationship between experience and knowing is largely unproblematized in teacher education. Experience is valorized by practicing professionals and by student teachers alike as integral to the process of being and becoming a teacher. In a research project I conducted, for example, practicing teachers foregrounded the importance of experience as they discussed what had influenced them in the process of learning to teach (see, Walsh, 2001b).[1] Ben* said, "Where the rubber meets the road, that's where you learn." Bob* noted that when he started a new position and was standing at front of the room and, "the principal says, well, have a good day, Mr. G., and closes the door—here we are, we're teaching. And nothing from that foundations course came back. It's all been experience. Hands on experience" (Walsh, 2001b, pp. 159-160).[2] 'Real' classroom experience is seen as separate from and more useful than what is learned at university.

Strangely, when more years in a classroom and further experience fail to 'fix up' the things that don't work any longer or that never really did, the centrality of experience remains unchallenged.

Britzman (1986, 1991, 1992) interrogates experience and how its relationship to knowledge is severed, how the interrelationship of the two is undermined in the academy and in the institution of public school. Experience, she notes, is fragmented, decontextualized, and separated from knowledge; the latter is viewed as objective and detached from the former, a division so deeply entrenched that it seems a simple reflection of the ways things are. The messy way that these two influence each other is thus denied.

> Fragmentation separates knowledge from experience and experience from knower. Here, knowledge concerns all the ideas, discourses, and possibilities that enable one to reflect upon the meanings of experience. Yet in academic life, knowledge and experience are typically fragmented by tradition and design. There is a disjunction between the authoritative discourse required by the academy and the internally persuasive discourse that can extend the understandings and meanings one already possesses. The fragmentation of knowledge from experience, however, is so pervasive that we come to expect personal exclusion. Its roots are in the arrangement of academic knowledge, the dualism of content and pedagogy, the selection and politics of knowledge and the tension between theory and practice. (Britzman, 1991, p. 35)

the fragmentation that nobody really
fits inside of overlapping cutting
off different parts of
the person
(October 28, p. 10)

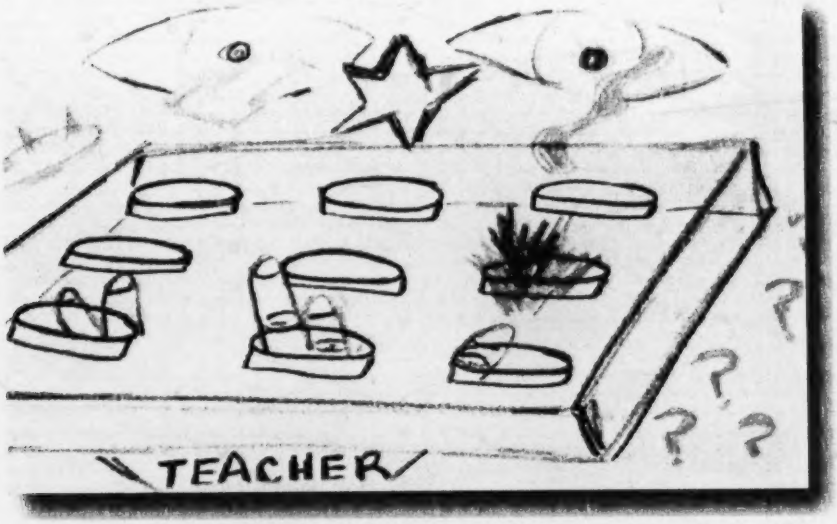
this is the teacher's hands

and the eyes

an ear into the curriculum
(July 22, p. 13)

the cool look and
the arched eyebrow
(August 24, p. 8)

this is the teacher's hands reaching
through this box these kids don't mark the usual
that you can plug in and they fit perfectly
these kids are really the different ones you've got
the stars you've got the different shaped ones the
more fluid ones and some with the spiky edges and
we're trying to fit through trying to make them go through
their curriculum those long narrow tubes and you're
reaching out his way and they're coming in this way
and it's the connection that's difficult to make
(July 22, p. 13)



I sat in classes with native elders and the first time I
was very uncomfortable because
they would talk and then they would be sitting there
and I had no idea what was expected of me it's
very different there's this shift
very much a shift you're not expected to
produce something in ten minutes you're left
to sit with it take it and fit it into
your experience and so maybe there is a
cultural expectation maybe we have to start thinking
in a whole bigger different way societal change
(March 3, pp. 13-14)

if you're taught that the only
way you can be knowledgeable is
to go out and acquire knowledge
then what did you start with?

you started with nothing
(March 3, p. 14)

Knowledge, conceptualized as separate from the knower and her experience, is a legacy from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The clear distinction between subject and object in combination with the notion of the individual as rational, self-conscious, and reasonably complete unto herself contributes to the illusion that knowledge can be broken down into discernible and comprehensible bits. Possibilities exist then for organizing, classifying, and hierarchizing knowledge with the 'knower' as controller of such processes. As well, accumulation of knowledge is conceivable. Teaching, then, is about reducing knowledge to small enough bits that can then ostensibly be distributed in orderly ways to the waiting learner (see Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, pp. 162-167; Laidlaw, 2000, pp. 15-16).

there's knowing and it's not about
the process and the living and being in
this world in the way we are it's always about
knowing more knowing enough
not knowing enough not
enough we have to get more and
there's never any end to it
(November 25, pp. 8-9)

the whole idea of teacher as
expert how are we conditioned into that
role know all the little compartments how
can we get out of that mind set so
we can really work with people how
do we buy into these things
feel fearful we're not using our talents our
abilities the things we can do aren't
being valued
(October 28, p. 15)

there's a very big danger that
we're just stuffing widgets
through our schools if you
really got to know the ones
that are wearing Mohawks
and got past the image maybe
we wouldn't have so many
angry students feeling as if
they are being tossed aside
(October 13, p. 24)

we're trying to help people live in a world
and exist in a world and unfortunately it's
packaged in schools as knowing but there's
different ways of knowing different things to
understand it's just packaged the wrong way
doesn't allow people to live
in their own ways
(November 25, p. 10)

not all kinds of knowing are
testable so much of life is
not testable and that's what

we've got to live in
(November 25, p. 6)

> Where is she?
> Activity/passivity
> Sun/Moon
> Culture/Nature
> Day/Night
>
> Father/Mother
> Head/Heart
> . . .
>
> Man
> Woman
>
> Always the same metaphor: we follow it, it carries us, beneath all its figures, wherever discourse is organized. If we read or speak, the same thread or double braid is leading us throughout literature, philosophy, criticism, centuries of representation and reflection.
>
> Thought has always worked through opposition,
> Speaking/Writing
> Parole/Écriture
> High/Low
>
> Through dual, hierarchical oppositions. (Cixous, 1986, pp. 63-64)

Olson (2002), in her feminist critique of information systems, notes how hierarchy in classification serves to provide an illusion of order in the midst of what seems chaotic, a contrived and arbitrary organization (pp. 54-61)—"paternalism . . . embedded in control through the order of a hierarchically structured universal language—modelled on an army—to stand against a fear of anarchy and chaos" (p. 61).

I teach foods and fashion and
a lot of people who are teachers say
'you're a teacher? you actually
went to university so you could
teach foods? I thought you might go to SAIT or
something' you realize there's a hierarchy
within the school
people who teach 30-level courses are

up there if you teach a diploma exam course
you're at the top and if you teach foods mechanics and
woodworking you're at the bottom and everybody sort of
falls in between so it's an interesting
hierarchy being at the bottom
(January 27, pp. 15-16)

its sort of like what I do isn't as
valuable as a 10-20-30 English math whatever I
know that other staff members look at me differently
than a person that teaches Bio 30 I'm not
taken as seriously
(January 27, p. 16)

> The fact that the dualisms of body and mind, together with the division of labour between head and hand, have themselves been laid open to debate, can be traced to their incapacity to explain the world as it is. . . . This represents an opportunity to produce articulations of the relations between human beings and the world that overcome present relations of class, race, and sexual domination. In seeking out these new relations, the female body, with its ideologically constructed and yet also practical proximity to nature, will be one means of intervention among many. (Haug et al, 1987, p. 28)

the kids walk into my class and they
know that that foods or fashion are not as
valuable and so the amount of effort they put in is
totally different and it's the same with the
parents you go to parent-teacher interviews and
I'm sitting there my friends come and chit chat the
kids come and sit and talk while their parents are
somewhere else people don't view you as being educated or
as intelligent or able to understand the finer points of something
(January 27, pp. 16-17)

there's a hierarchy even in degrees
the kids know that
teachers as a profession are lower
(January 27, p. 17)

On moving outside of being&knowing that revolves around hierarchized oppositions, Trinh Minh-ha (1989) says:

> The strategy of mere reversal needs to be displaced further, that is to say, neither simply renounced nor accepted as an end in itself. . . . One

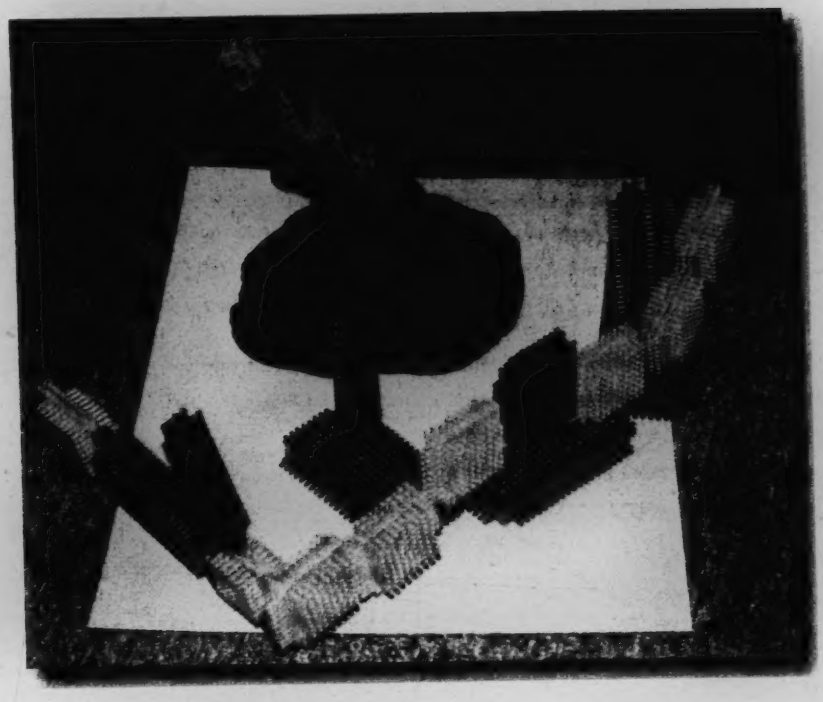
example that comes to mind are the procedures which in Asia postulate not one, not two, but three centers in the human being: the intellectual (the *path*), the emotional (the *oth*), and the vital (the *kath*). The martial arts concentrate on developing awareness of the latter, which they call *tantien* or the *hara*. This center, located below the navel. . . radiates life. It directs vital movements and allows one to relate to the world with instinctual immediacy. But instinct(ual) immediacy here is not opposed to reason, for it lies outside the classical realm of duality assigned to the sensible and the intelligible. . . . Each part of the body [can become] infused with consciousness. . . . Bring a new awareness of life into previously forgotten, silenced, or deadened areas of the body. Consciousness here is not the result of an accumulation of knowledge and experience but the terms of an ongoing unsettling process. (p. 40)

***

so much washes over me as I hear the words of the teacher
as she spills out words of anger frustration longing I could
have written that the year I a drama-language arts specialist
and assistant principal was given grade eight science for
after all as teachers couldn't we teach everything? the
generalist approach the kids knew within moments that I
was over my head that I was a page or two ahead in the text
I had no passion or exuberance though I tried gimmicks
games activities food anything that might keep their
behaviour at a level of relative calm after all I was the
assistant principal—in charge of student behaviour I
couldn't let their disruptions spill out into the hall they have
an instinct at that age for fear my fear they are like a pack
of marauders carnivores at times I would liken them to that
learning had no bite compared to the blood they smelled
when I was going down even the most kind of them joined
their faces hard closed gloating at yet another victory the
pain is as real now as it was then and always I looked to
blamed myself what could I have done differently?
(October 28, p. 13)

prickly eighth graders a band
of marauders about to accost her she was
upright and ready ready to meet
this challenge but she's sinking to this
puddle of clay and they're going to
jump up and get her very soon

they know the jig is up she can't can't
be something that she's not she's
doing her very very best but
she's sinking
(October 28, p.13)



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An illusory position where one is certain in her knowledge and where one can never quite acquire enough knowledge, enough information, never really know enough to teach is revealed in the problematic discourse of 'teacher as expert' (see Britzman, 1986, 1991, 1992). As teacher, she starts from a place of perpetual inadequacy. In Jessica's story of teaching eighth grade science as a drama, Language Arts specialist and administrator, she questions the expectation that as a teacher you should be able to teach everything, what was referred to in an introductory reading we did as "a consumer view of education, school as a Wal-Mart department store where a teacher will not know which department she will work in for the day" (Connell & Johnston-Kline, 1999, p. 85). Jessica notes her own lack of passion for the subject matter and the fact that she was only a page or two ahead in the book.

The notion of being able to accumulate 'enough' knowledge in a particular area and then being able to speak from a position of 'mastery' is one that is pervasive in teaching. Cixous reminds us, however, that such a position assumes a universality and univocal truth in relation to knowledge.

> I think one has a hard time escaping the discourse of mastery when using, . . . as a teacher, discourse I'll call "objective" : by that I mean a discourse

> that does not involve an easily located subject of enunciation, that speaks at that particular moment not just in the name of but as universal knowledge itself. (Cixous in Cixous & Clément, 1986, p. 137)

Is the question really about how much information one has collected, can collect about a particular subject? Or is it more about how well one can articulate the process of making associations, seeing relationships among concepts, sharing one's experiences of doing so—one's ability to integrate experience and knowledge, acknowledge them as interconnected? Students and teachers know on some level that spouting concepts and hiding behind information that masquerades as knowledge is a deeply unsatisfying way of learning&teaching for both.

> you *can* pull away from being the
> expert in a subject area if you *are* an
> expert it's very easy to ask the open-ended questions or
> to give responsibility to the students or to say you don't
> know if you really do have an incredible understanding of
> the basics of that knowledge area and if you don't you
> don't even know what good questions to ask or at least
> be passionate about it or fascinated with it or longing to explore it
> more or something that you're bringing in so that the kids
> feel something but they don't just feel this person
> textbook flipping
> (October 28, p. 15)

> I never ever when I was a kid said when I grow up I
> want to be an expert you know but I want
> experience and that's a different thing so then I
> started to think about well what is knowledge?
> knowledge isn't information it's not just carrying all
> of this stored stuck in my internal computers stuff
> that I can blurb up that makes everybody go "Wow,
> look at what she's managed to put inside her head"
> and is able to pull out knowledge is true knowing
> there's a comfort level to it it comes with
> intuitiveness with the experience of working
> through something where you can say that this is
> what's going on or you get a
> sensingness about something
>
> that's what true knowledge is and we all have access
> to that but we live in a world that wants these

humongous smokescreens around us and to me I
think we're creating this constant level of anxiety
that none of us can really live up to without
having major cracks
(January 27, p. 11)

it comes from that place where you've
had enough that you know that if you keep trying to
please and meet other people's expectations
that you burn out and that's when you start to
houseclean don't need this anymore don't need
this but this is what drives me what I'm
passionate about this makes me good

it comes from a place of crisis

a place of just fatigue I can't
can't be everything to all people and I
think that's what growing up is about
(March 3, pp. 12-13)

***

and the eyes
whether you're beginning or ending or
in the middle you're always on your own
expectations of what you should be able to
accomplish and so your eyes are looking at this
evaluating and I've always felt you have the eyes of
your stakeholders your community your administrators your
everyone your peers and the kids themselves looking at and
looking at you through this process
and I think it rates more questions for me than it did and
I don't think it's something that you answer either
so it's just questions
(July 22, p. 13)

expect *v.* Also 7-8 exspect. [ad. L. *ex(s)pect-are* to look out for, await, F. *ex-* (see EX-*pref.*[1]) + *spect-are* to look, freq. Of *spec-ere* to see. Cf. OF. *especter* (14th c.) to await.] (OED)

to look, to see, to await

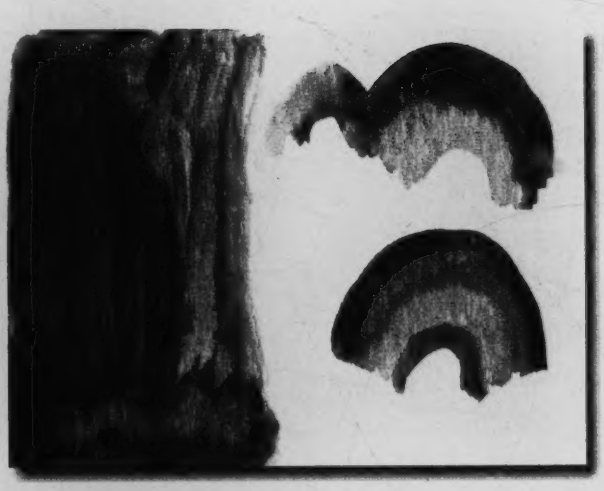
to await to look towards a future-directed perspective a teleological orientation that ties us to what will be *rather than to what* is

Vision, the ability to observe, is the primary means through which knowledge is validated in an empirical frame of reference (J. Scott, 1992, pp. 22-25). In vision, the one who looks is separated from what is seen and, therefore, what is 'known' is objectified, effectively kept separate, and therefore assumed to be under control. The look itself, how it is shaped, is unchallenged. Irigaray (1985c) questions the primacy of the gaze, the look in rereading Freud and penis envy.

> So Freud will see, without being seen? Without being seen seeing? Without even being questioned about the potency of his gaze? Which leads to the envy of the omnipotence of gazing, knowing?. . . To envy and jealousy of the eye-penis, the phallic gaze? . . . More than me? but he will inform me of it. Displaced castration? *The gaze is at stake from the outset.* . . . The gaze has always been involved. (p. 47)

the cool look and
the arched eyebrow
(August 24, p. 8)

something coming down
pressure to make an impression
oppressive dark thing that tries to
stamp out your light the eyebrow
it's time to take those eyebrows that
are raised at you and
turn them into something else
(August 24, p. 10)



For Grumet (1988) the look prevalent in school is one distanced from the body, a separating gesture—one meant to distinguish and clarify relations of power, control, and domination (pp. 110-111). She follows Foucault in outlining *super-vision* as the "arrangement of persons in collective units accessible to constant surveillance" (p. 111)—an activity in which the female teacher engages even as she is subject to it herself. Grumet examines women's uneasiness with such a contradictory subject position through tracing how women were inserted/inserted themselves into a role of teacher—and in an institution—predetermined by men.

> The power of the look to dominate is inscribed in the visual images of women found in our great museums, tawdry porn theatres, and fashion magazines. Static, inhibited from moving by binding clothing, high heeled shoes, ornate coiffures, or naked and supine, female subjectivity is absorbed into flesh, arranged for the viewing pleasure of men. . . . We cannot assume that when the young female schoolteacher first entered the classroom designed to deploy the look of the male minister, she did not first and foremost experience herself as the object rather than the subject of the look. (p. 113)

I can't help thinking about Erin here her first day of playschool how she came home and said that she wouldn't be going back when I asked her why she said 'there's a lady who calls herself the teacher there and she thinks she can tell you what to do all day and we have to sit too much we don't get enough exercise' (bodies choreographed super-vised into stillness?)

(a text that refuses submission)

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The drama masks image has been removed for copyright reasons. See:

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when I went back to my writing
I had the eyes
eyes I hadn't noticed when
I first read it eyes I talked about wanting to
close the door put up a curtain
and no eyes were going to see me
if no eyes are looking
that's my way of
dealing with the fear
eyes eyes (August 24, p. 20)

I feel the need to shut
the door on the classroom I don't know
whether it's to protect myself
people on the outside looking in
in case they judge my call they don't
understand what I'm doing but I always feel
the need to shut the door maybe it's to keep
prying eyes away
stop them watching me

I still have that fear
I'm still on probation
(August 24, p. 20)

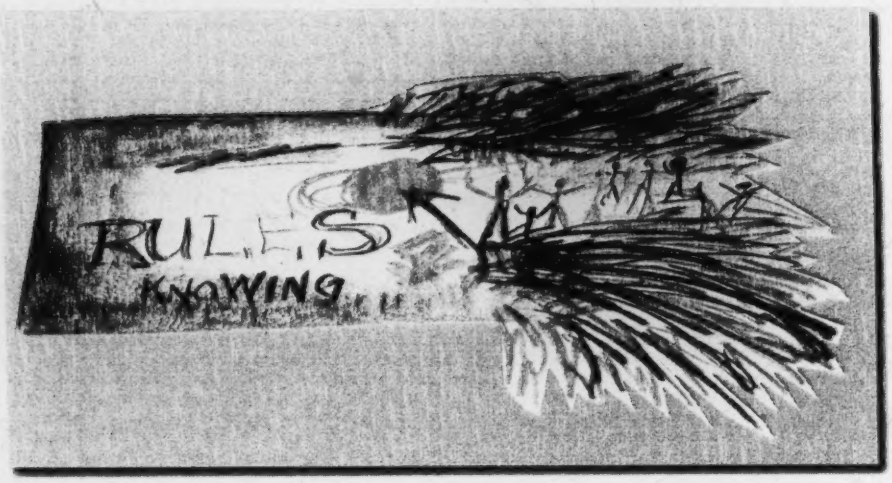
eyes
eyes watching
eyes
(October 13, p. 3)

the eyes I can't get
past the eyes
and eyebrows
that arched eyebrow
(October 13, p. 4)

In her early work, Irigaray (1985d) uses the *speculum* to problematize notions of seeing, of vision, of the gaze as neutral, transparent. A flat mirror, she contends reflects back more of the same, does not admit otherness while the speculum is curved, 'fold[s] back on itself,' is 'on the inside' (Irigaray, 1985b, p. 155). She writes:

> In the title of *Speculum*, as throughout the whole book, I played on words, on meanings, to enable a different truth to appear. Thus, *speculum*, denotes a gynecological instrument, though at an earlier period in our culture this term was used to denote the most faithful expression of reality possible. *Speculum mundi*, for example, was not an uncommon title and was what I had in mind. It signifies mirror of the world—not so much the reflection of the world in a mirror as the thought of the reality or objectivity of the world through a discourse. . . . My intention in choosing the title . . . related to the project of constituting the world—and not only the specular world—of the other as a woman. . . . The question of the mirror figures as interpretation and enclosure of the Western subject in the *Same*, even in those propositions concerning the need to use a different mirror for the constitution of female identity. (1996, pp. 59-60)

a group of people four men and four women are at a house by the ocean it is night everyone is smiling happy there is a plot to harm one of the women everyone including me seems to know but the victim is unaware she is knocked unconscious thrown into the ocean trapped underwater everyone else is back at the house acting friendly visiting not acknowledging what happened I feel responsible full of dread and guilt I can see the victim thrashing struggling but I know that she is strong that she will survive and return (which she does)



We look at ourselves in the mirror to *please someone,* rarely to interrogate the state of our body or our spirit, rarely for ourselves and in search of our own becoming. The mirror almost always serves to reduce us to pure exteriority—of a very particular kind. It functions as a possible way to constitute screens between the other and myself. In a way quite different from the mucous membranes or the skin that serve as living, porous, fluid media to achieve communion as well as difference, the mirror is a frozen—and polemical—weapon to keep us apart. . . . I have yet to unveil, unmask, or veil myself *for me*—to veil myself so as to achieve self-contemplation, for example, to let my gaze travel over myself so as to limit my exposure to the other and repossess my own gestures and garments, thus nestling back into my vision and contemplation of myself. Which is not a kind of cold narcissism but rather a way that, as an adult, I can supplement and support the different houses, the different bodies that have borne me, wrapped me, rocked me, embraced me, enlaced me. The mirror, and indeed the gaze, are frequently used a weapons or tolls that ward off touching and hold back fluidity, even the liquid embrace of the gaze. (Irigaray, 1993d, p. 65)

mucous that which is
of the body texture touch what is
hidden escapes containment defies
form what cannot be held by
the hand the eye
another way of being&knowing
not form-alized
mutable mobile
messy fluid

uncertainty
(not-knowingness)

in Social Studies we
talk about all the different
aspects of what makes a community and
how we in the Western world are
trying to make all people in other areas of the
world follow our pattern and it
doesn't necessarily follow that
that's the best pattern for them like
trying to make aboriginal people here
follow our way of knowing they have
a different way of knowing and it's not that
one is better than the other we can use both of them

is there an answer for
all of us is there really an answer that
we're moving toward or is it really
just the process
(November 25, p. 11)

Not knowing. Not having certainty. Changing borders, crossing boundaries. Losing oneself and reforming again, differently. Always in motion. In some discussions of spirituality, not-knowing is valued as part of a learning process. Halifax (1999) outlines three tenets of her Zen order: not-knowing (leaving behind what is known and immersing oneself in the unfamiliar), bearing witness (being fully present to what is), and healing oneself and others (incorporating new knowledge and returning to share, to teach)—moments that correspond to what Christ (1986) labels nothingness, awakening, insight, and new naming, and what Chung Hyun Kyung (1992) calls impasse, choice for life, and building community. Each outlines moments in spiritual practice that emphasize how not-knowing can initiate a process of change and self-responsibility, and how it can be painful, disorienting, and risky. Halifax (1999) explains how some cultures acknowledge not-knowing as crucial to rites of passage, as necessary to moments of growth, and also of the extreme skepticism with which it is viewed in our own:

> Where are the rituals that open us to not-knowing? The rituals that grant us the space, freedom, and encouragement to grow or change? Almost absent. Some people have to literally go crazy in order to deepen or mature; to dare falling off the edge and into the other's perspective; to drift alone, apart from culture, before rebounding into an arena of introspection, deep questioning, and, finally, action. Some resolve to enter a strong spiritual practice. Others become physically ill and, like wounded healers, learn to heal themselves and then turn outward to help others. (1999, p. 175)

how does one teach from a place in a place of not-knowingness? how does it feel? teaching in the dark not seeing not-knowing where one is going?

where is she?

they set up tents on the ridge of a mountain need to find a source of water Heather is sure that there is a lake below somewhere but doesn't have a map there is no clear path who will go? four of them begin their descent through the trees the underbrush becomes thicker and thicker sharp branches and deadfall lie in very direction they can't see their feet only know that they must continue to head down the slope they stop listen in the deep quiet think they can hear water follow the sound begin to feel dampness on their boots see a trickle a creek follow it finally a clearing a lake they have not marked their path have to find a new way back

(back at camp on the ridge they stand in the middle as the sun sets in the west and a full moon rises almost simultaneously in the east experience a quiet spectacle timeless also new)

in the temple voices rise together separately find one another resonate harmonize
sometimes bray in dissonance singularity cacophony energy spirals bodies hum

viii.

to gather

> Our work in the group has been based on the assumption that our concern with standards cannot be seen as superficial veneer; the clear waters of theoretical insight will not necessarily wash us clean. (Haug, 1989, p. 85)

the writer cannot outwrite anything anymore the text is catching up the process of writing itself has led her to realize the depth of her unrest with teaching how much and how often she herself internalizes what happens has also led her to reread her unrest too take it out of herself

she has had to open envelopes sealed shut for years

she notices too how isolation in university teaching has worked to make her turn even further inward yes there are people to plan with and yes there is help with organizing course outlines and assignments and yes there are colleagues to talk with when problems arise but somehow this is not enough seems to happen on the surface of what is does not disrupt interrupt disturb so much front-end loaded so disinterested in the process of reinterpretation and there is too a definite issue of safety of keeping things close not admitting what does not feel right in such an environment and then confidence flags (a colleague once said to her that the university is a soul-destroying place) and she herself once said that she could not return to school because it was psychically abusive could not believe what came out of her mouth

and how is this different from what the women in the group said not really different at all and yet there is something wrong when those who are teaching teachers get trapped inside themselves

the place where things need to be
changed is the group performance everybody supporting
these really dysfunctional performances

> what I've been leading for the last year are creative
> experiences I've got people from all walks of life coming
> to me once a week to do spontaneous painting they're
> painting whatever is happening in their lives so it's sort of like
> us getting together here but everybody is from different walks

professionals they paint themselves into places but then they start
to discuss all of their fears and frustrations and
they walk away at the end of every week
feeling a whole lot better

if you've got your ratings and all of the different
ways of being evaluated and you've got to be this
together expert you're supporting dysfunctional
behavior nobody's saying let's break this apart
for the whole thing to work better for us to grow and
explore you've got to break that system down and I
can see it with my group like this week I had an
accountant painting with his hands he spit at his
painting everybody else kind of looked at him
what is he doing? but at the end of the evening these
people sat down and laughed because they were all
going through different things so when he spit all over
his painting that allowed the person who owns
a variety of different daycare centers and the
marketing person over here it allowed each
of them and they just sat and laughed

it seems to me that
that's what's got to change we're all
walking around with fears and frustrations but you
can't do it within the same working group because
somebody's going to go
look at me I'm together
(March 3, pp. 17-18)

at a staff meeting I said let's talk about
mentorship not only with new people but also
with people changing levels we could do off
site mentorship with other high schools one of
the ways to look at the pain and fear is having
things like study groups where there's discussion
having things like mentorship formal and informal
those are the kinds of support networks we need
(April 28, p. 16)

we don't have a women's network
group of admin we don't have like
the old boys they all get together but the women
administrators don't have any of that
(April 28, p. 14)

it's collaborative that's what we're
talking about you can't feel isolated you
can't go through something if you're
banging your ideas in a very small
container all by yourself
(April 28, p. 16)

I think that's what we instill though
as a professional you're responsible for
your decisions and it's kind of an autonomy

that's one of the things you come away with
I *am* autonomous and it's weak
maybe to ask someone else for
what you don't know
(April 28, p. 16)

we certainly don't instill a collaborative
practice where at the end of the week you'd
say ok this is what happened where you
open up and put it out on the table
your decisions your practice
(April 28, p. 16)

we lose 30% of our new
teachers and we lose the top
ones because of the difference between
their expectations coming in and what
actually occurs in reality the gap between
(April 28, p. 14)

there are 30 boards now that have
ATA mentorship programs for first
year teachers because we're losing our
seasoned teachers and poor
seasoned teachers are so exhausted
that they just don't have the energy to
work with our new teachers
(April 28, p. 14)

she has to interrupt all this for just a moment the value of working in the group of sharing ideas and supporting one another is obvious but it can also be problematic what is being learned? how are things changing? in terms of mentorship who is doing the mentoring? and what is s/he perpetrating? she remembers once a cooperating teacher who informed her in front of the student teacher that lesson and unit planning was a lot of university bullshit and that real teachers did not do it (this real teacher did still does) and also that his 'boy' did not have to do it

> It is the function of art to reorganize experience so it is perceived freshly. At the very least, the painting, the poem, or the play cleanses a familiar scene, washing away the film of habit and dust collected over time so that it is seen anew. (Grumet, 1988, p. 81)

are we going to walk
away from here and still be
thinking the same thoughts only be
more aware of those thoughts or does
this process help us to
break out?
(March 3, p. 18)

it's given me the strength the ability to say
no to certain things to take the time out and
to question what I'm doing to reflect
(March 3, p. 19)

remember when I had that one situation with
the kid who scared the living crap out of me?
the feedback helped me oh my god how close was I to
losing it there? I appreciate the opportunity to express
it because I don't have a forum to express it and also
the time to express it
(March 3, pp. 18-19)

is it the talking?
writing? is it doing art?
a combination?
(March 3, p. 18)

the artistic the opportunity to
write just brings up a whole
and the opportunity to have
response from other
people too is excellent
(May 12, p. 1)

the artistic processes speak
to me too the kinds of things we're
forced to get away from think mentally
sort of squelch those expressive parts
of us this gives us the opportunity to go back
revisit and we forget that the body learns
kinesthetically and emotionally together and when
you cut that off you're really cutting off a big
part of who you are so by being able to do the
explorations in this group we did dance we did
writing we did clay we did drawings we did
everything you're tapping into that area that's
starving and that's a wonderful way to express
things you don't use
(May 12, pp. 1-2)

all those different
routes allow us information that's
always available to us and we're not
using go back into those places pull
up so much more
fill out our framework
(May 12, p. 2)

we don't have the power in our
teaching for the most part to address our
fears because we don't have a lot to say often
about the situation there's people that have
power over us that's creating that fear within
us you're strangled
because you can't often change

those things what you can do is
work through them through processes of
creativity and writing and moving and talking
(May 12, p. 2)

I don't think I've ever
had an outlet where I've been able
to talk like in this group
having other women to share with
legitimizing the artistic part
it's given me confidence to ask
questions about my world and how
other people view learning
(May 12, p. 3)

it makes me sit back and go
yeah there's the problem you know
this isn't all me
(March 3, p. 18)

we complete the circle as always by passing around the playdough like a talking stick so that each can say what she needs to uninterrupted before she leaves we laugh too and note how often whoever is talking rolls the playdough into the shape of a penis while she speaks molds it carefully then squishes it as she passes it to the next woman and how she does the same thing and over and over again and again

Victoria says you realize that this time everybody's making a ball with that on purpose? and I say yes I should have been taking pictures of these as we've been going along that would have been a whole other study

a whole other study?

(maybe not)

ix.

coda

I have a sense of peace with this work now. As always, I know I can trust the process of writing, the practice of writing. I stay with it, even when it leads me to difficult places, places I'd rather not go. Kristjana Gunnars once asked me, where is your faith when you are writing? I answered, my faith is in the love of the words. I stay with them, then let them go.

Is this writing about women teachers? Are the difficult experiences discussed herein ones that some men share, that some women have no access to? Do female and male teachers live similar circumstances and yet experience them in different ways? I am wary as I write this of even using the terms like 'male' and 'female' teachers. Of course, we can no longer overgeneralize, univeralize, essentialize, etc. Nothing is simple. I do believe, however, that what theorists like Irigaray and Klein have shown us about difference—for Irigaray, a metaphorical feminine and for Klein, different subjective states—is valuable and productive for helping us to rewrite our own teaching experiences outside what we assume to be true and inarguable. The difference they elucidate highlights what we take for granted. Both, in their own ways, remind us about a way of being&knowing that is grounded in an integrated and everchanging bodymindpsirit, a way of being&knowing that lies outside what we have heretofore been able to symbolize, and that is perhaps unsymbolizable—a part of ourselves that we have denied and repressed because it doesn't fit what we have accepted as true, a part of ourselves that remains largely unvalidated in teaching and learning. If you, as a reader, have found yourself engaged in the messiness of this text whether in moments of resonance with, resistance to, or confusion among the words and the silences in these pages, then the work of troubling experiences has perhaps begun.

For me, this work *is* about being a woman and a teacher, though initially I resisted, was horrified at the idea. I have had to process an amazing number of incidents from my own

life as student and teacher as these pages unfolded. On some days, the images, thoughts, and bodily sensations flooded me at a rate much faster than I could type. I simply had to sit and let be. My resistance to resymbolizing my own difficult experiences and those of the women in the group has been rather startling at times. I have had to admit that I am, in fact, a woman and a teacher, and that whether I like it or not, this positions me in certain ways. I am grateful to have been shown, through working with such remarkable women, the profound power of community. I have learned on a more-than-intellectual level how isolation serves to preserve what is. I see more clearly how we need each other to validate, to contradict, and to challenge what seems to be true about what we experience; so much is entangled, enmeshed. We have to come outside ourselves. Ellis, Zelda, Roxanne,Victoria, Marie, Rebecca, Jessica, Lou, and I found the courage to do so. I have been reminded frequently as this text asserted itself, how our interactions and relationships with others affect how we read our experiences, that others necessarily 'mess up' what we are trying to do, and that this is something good, something productive. We are never truly alone.

A further point of resistance that surfaced for me in the writing of this text is my seemingly unyielding desire to be certain, to 'know' for sure. Though I have written extensively about the importance of shifting boundaries and of accepting ambiguity, and though I am intimate with the slippery process of writing, I am almost daily reminded of how I want things to be clear, straightforward, and under control. How safe a place certainty is. How invested I am in retaining that place. How insidious and deeply held are some of my beliefs. I have at times been keenly aware of the contradictory aspects of myself. Through this text then, I have tried to find ways of usurping what seems apparent, what seems necessary and true.

As a teacher and teacher educator, through the process of our group inquiry and through the process of writing this text, I have come to acknowledge some of the ways that my being&knowing has been shaped and to find ways of moving beyond. In teaching my way through doctoral studies, I have stayed with, been mindful of, my fears and difficult experiences: the times when I have felt afraid to go to class, the times when I have

dreaded speaking to a student, the times when I have felt almost physically immobilized at the thought of going to campus, the times when I have left unopened envelopes containing student course evaluations. There is much that makes me uncomfortable, much I had previously been unable to reinterpret, read differently. I have learned to respect my discomforts and fears as important teachers, to listen to them. I feel now better equipped, as Victoria said at one point in our work, to 'sit back and go, yeah, there's the problem, you know, this isn't all me.'

Early in my experiences as a teacher educator, I determined that I would turn the seams of my teaching inside out, articulate my own self-doubts, worries, and fears as I taught and worked with the undergraduates. I felt that part of my work was to disrupt the veneer of my own performance, unsettle it so that the students would have to examine some of their own assumptions about what a teacher is and what a teacher does. In sharing this intent with a senior professor, I was told 'not to scare' the students, please. Somehow, I know that the students weren't scared though. They seem to already sense, on some level, the difficulties and contradictions they face in becoming teachers. What they most need is not to feel isolated, not to internalize what happens and how they feel as they process experiences and encounter their own resistances. They need tools, ways of doing so, practices, maybe. It occurs to me that working with pre-service teachers might be similar in some ways to what successful writing teachers do. They tell us how they themselves write. They give us permission to make a mess, get confused, and to somehow work things out. They encourage us to talk with others, to create together. They tell us often that a final draft is never really 'final,' just resting for now. And they show us that when we are present with our words, when we listen carefully enough, choices become apparent, and we can revise, 'see again' differently.

As teacher educators, we need to find ways to be present to our students and help them be present to themselves and to each other as they explore the complex and sometimes frightening dimensions of their beliefs and resistances. All too often, I find I have lost myself, perhaps hidden myself, and the students, amid busyness and hurry—and also behind stacks of paper, books, materials, and tried-and-tested strategies. The group

process re-presented in these pages has many possibilities for dwelling *with* what is, for being mindful, for validating other ways of being&knowing. Working in community can allow the space to surface concerns as well as to negotiate meaning. Listening to one another through artful response is one powerful means of being present.

Halifax (1999), Christ (1986), and Chung Hyun Kyung (1992) all suggest moments of spiritual experience that include being disoriented and not-knowing, staying with what is and suffering (in the original sense of the word, to endure or go through), as well as integrating what is new through naming, then letting go into transformation. Learning to teach may well include some such moments. Writing this text certainly has.

Her teaching will never be the same again.
Neither will she.

x.

notes

& space

1. This italicized section as well as poems appearing on (dissertation) pages 19, 36-37, 69, and 79 appeared in *Language and Literacy: A Canadian Educational E-Journal* (see Walsh, 2000). Additional bits from this publication are also woven into pages 3-5, 122, 73-78, 174 (note 7 under '& space'), 181 (note 1 under 'underworld').

2. Pseudonyms are indicated with asterisks throughout the text.

3. 'Feminist spirituality' is work done at the intersection of feminism and spirituality and can be distinguished from 'women's spirituality' (Eller, 1996, p. 274), a term some writers use to refer to involvement with wicca and/or goddess worship (Caron, 1993, p. 34; Puttick, 1997, p. 200; Stein, 1986, pp. 1-4). For the purposes of this work, I borrow from Eller (1996) and King (1993) in using 'women's spirituality' to describe the spirituality of women throughout history both inside and outside of established religions, and 'feminist spirituality' to discuss those aspects of spirituality that have grown out of or have been recovered because of the work of feminists in recent decades. It is with feminist spirituality that I am concerned.

4. I am indebted to Di Brandt and to Kristjana Gunnars who brought alive for me the idea of having the text interrupt and speak itself. After reading a poetry manuscript I had written, Di suggested that I ask the text what it wanted to do—an exercise that showed me aspects of the work I had not yet acknowledged. Kristjana Gunnars plays with the writer and the text in *The Prowler* (1989).

5.

> Feminists who are fond of poststructural critiques have given up on finding out "exactly" what is going on. They are skeptical of exactly that kind of question, because it is grounded in descriptions of knowledge, truth, rationality, and subjectivity that humanism put forward centuries ago to make sense of a world very different from the one we live in today, one that many believe requires different inscriptions. (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 477)

Though poststructuralism itself cannot be totalized nor explained in a complete and "exact" way, feminists who write about and practice poststructuralism generally agree that several arenas must be addressed in the process of becoming critical of how we have been written historically, of opening possibilities, and of rewriting our being&knowing in the world. What has previously been seen as transparent must be re-examined, again and again. What are our blind spots, that which we take for granted? Shildrick (1997, p. 5) and St. Pierre (2000) note that integral to poststructuralism is a critique of liberal

humanism. For example, what counts as knowledge and why? What do we believe to be true and where do these beliefs come from? Is there any such thing as that which is true? How is language implicated in how we come to know ourselves and how we make sense of our lives? What is meant by the 'self'—and how does it come to be? What power investments are hidden in our assumptions and also in the way we express them? As Butler (1992) writes, "the task is to interrogate what the theoretical move that establishes foundations *authorizes*, and what precisely it excludes or forecloses" (p. 7).

> What a postmodern feminism may empower is a feminine that is excessive to the closure of binary sexual difference. What poststructuralism has done is to begin to prise open the cracks, to expose those gaps and silences that undermine the claims of modernist philosophy to impartiality and universality. Above all, it deconstructs the boundaries between categories, be they ontological, epistemological, ethical or material: and it demonstrates the inescapability of the leaks and flows across all such bodies of knowledge and bodies of matter. (Shildrick, 1997, p. 4)

Subjectivity, in poststructuralism, refers to " the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world"—"subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Subjectivity in poststructuralism differs from that of the individual in humanism in the sense that she is not considered to be rational in an intellectual and disembodied way, nor is she coherent, fully self-conscious and autonomous; subjectivity is not a singular internalized locus but rather a site where competing and often conflicting discourses take hold and shift positions, constantly moving, foregrounding themselves and then moving away (see, for example, Shildrick, 1997, pp. 147-149). Subjectivity is not about the individual, the person as a self-contained and self-determining entity, rather, subjectivity is a process in which the subject herself is complicit. She assumes different subject positions consciously and unconsciously, maintains and resists them.

Language is problematized in this context. It is never neutral, a simple transport system for thought and ideas. It is itself constitutive, the way in which the subject constructs herself in the world. This was never more apparent to me than when I was part of a group of researchers talking with a Dene elder. For some reason, we got onto the topic of death in our conversation. We asked him what the Dene word for death was. He said that no such word existed. We asked what could be said when someone dies then—and he proceeded to write down a word and say it for us. He said that his term meant "meeting up and moving on"—a concept far different than what death connotes for many of us in more Western European traditions, and a concept integral to how one approaches life and living as well. Language shapes our being&knowing. Different languages construct us differently, shape our experiences and how we assign meaning to them. The words we speak and the structure within which they are encased encase us too.

> Different languages and different discourses within the same language divide up the world and give it meaning in different ways which cannot be

> reduced to one another through translation or by an appeal to universally shared concepts reflecting a fixed reality. For example, the meanings of femininity and masculinity vary from culture to culture and language to language. They even vary between discourses within a particular language, for instance, and are subject to historical change. (Weedon, 1997, p. 22)

Underlying much poststructuralist theory is the belief that meaning is not inherent nor fixed in relation to particular words or 'signs' but that meaning evolves and is constructed in relation to other signs through association and difference within particular historical, sociocultural, and political contexts (see Weedon, 1997, pp. 21-26). Meaning is slippery, can be altered as it is situated differently in-relation-to. We are called to problematize language, the terms we use and assume to be neutral, the metaphors inherent in our speech and therefore in our being &knowing, the very grammar of our sentences and the taken-for-granted ways we speak and write and adhere to convention. What concepts lie beneath the surface of all this? What is constricting, restricting our conscious&unconscious beings? How are we given voice and also silenced through language? When are we allowed to speak and why then? Whose interests are being served, and how are we complicit in maintaining the status quo? What, again, are our blind spots, that which we take for granted?

I think it is worthwhile here to clarify too the distinction between 'poststructuralism' and 'postmodernism.' The latter is a broad term derived originally from architecture; it has evolved to describe different aspects of culture and artistic practice including those involved in literature and other art forms (see Hutcheon, 1989, pp. 1-2; Weedon, 1997, p. 170). An important foundation of postmodernism is that representation must always be kept open to question, that how something is represented must at the same time be challenged as to its position and power investments. "In general terms," Hutcheon says, "the postmodern takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement" (1989, p. 1). Though the terms 'postmodernism' and 'poststructuralism' are sometimes conflated and used interchangeably, they are not synonymous. Both, however, promote questioning of representational practices and the political implications therein. Poststructuralism originates from studies of language and philosophy. It builds on the structuralist work of de Saussure, his contention that meaning is not inherent in language itself, but that it is derived from the play of relations within linguistic structures. Though he theorizes that the association between signifier (sound or image) and signified (meaning) is arbitrary, he then 'fixes' meaning as something inalterable. Derrida's poststructuralism moves beyond this belief in noting the historicity and changeability of meaning (see Weedon, 1997, pp. 21-26).

6. Irigaray discusses yoga and breathing at several points in *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History* (1996) as well as in other texts. While I had read the former before several times, I did not make the connections I did when reading *Between East and West*. She expands her thinking further in the latter, and undoubtedly, I was more ready to hear what she had to say.

7. How do those working in the area feminist spirituality frame the term, 'spirituality'? King (1993) notes that the uncertainty of our times—rapid shifts taking place throughout the world in technology, communication, and ecology as well as ongoing military threats—has precipitated an intensified search for spirituality. She says that paradoxes "around the globe between growing diversity and tension created by self-destructive pluralism on one hand and the genuine search for integration and wholeness on the other" have moved us to "a moment of true crisis, a decisive turning point" (p. 7). Puttick (1997) contends that the 1960's counter culture was "an active rejection of scientific developments and socio-political values that had been invalidated—if not annihilated—by two world wars, and most immediately by the pointless destruction of the Vietnam War. Those who looked deeper perceived it as also. . . the loss of magic, mystery, prophecy and the sacred" (p. 11). In such a context, both Puttick (p. 1) and Motz (1997, p. 37) cite women's dissatisfaction with the doctrines of established religions that revolve around a single male god as one reason for the rise of alternative spiritual movements. King (1993) believes that the turbulence of our lives has necessitated a reframing of the term 'spirituality.'

> In our times 'spirituality' has become a more universal code word for the search of direction at a time of crisis. In secular society it has become a cipher for the discovery and recovery of a lost dimension. The term 'spirituality' is now used in different ways. It can refer to a shared reverence for life or to the new thought emerging from a wide range of experiences--from profound social changes to political liberation movements, and to the insights of a new physics and psychology. (p. 7)
> . . . Spirituality can be described as a process of transformation and growth, an organic and dynamic part of human development, of both individual and society. . . . The important point is [highlighting] spirituality as an integral, holistic and dynamic force in human life and affairs. (pp. 5-6)

For now, I frame 'spirituality' as process, an acknowledgement of and a working with energy, a process that integrates what seems inside with what seems outside, the changing alignments of these, respect for life and its immanent creative powers, a movement out of, or maybe between what seems individual with what seems more communal (see Fox, 1991, p. 12; King, 1993, pp. 5-7; Tomm, 1995, pp. 2-3). It is a process grounded in acknowledgement of what is, being open to and in the moment, a not-seeking-outside of the moment, the 'self.'

8. I purposely use the ampersand to connect words in constructions such as "being&knowing" as one way of demonstrating my commitment to working from a space between and beyond such ideas and words, not in a linear sense of the space *between* two points—more like a multidimensional & space, a both&and beyond. A commitment to finding different ways of being&knowing-in-the-world than the ones limited by our conventional ways of thinking and denoted by the words we use in a taken-for-granted way. I began the practice of using the ampersand in my master's study (Walsh, 1990),

my thinking inspired by an essay by Mezei (1985) where she interrogates the use of the slash and replaces it with the ampersand.

> And woman as object of the sentence, (sentenced to the object), as reader moves over, crosses over the slash and becomes writer, speaking subject, creator of her own text.
>
> And so I remove the slash: it falls, ambivalent as always, perhaps disconsolate, & is replaced by an ampersand, cheerful, accommodating.
>
> I have read
>
> &
>
> I have written
>
> &

This quote by Mezei (1985, p. 25) is a useful example of the kind of play with language that women writers have explored in looking for a language and a subjectivity of their own.

9. I use the term 'resymbolization' to help frame the process through which we reread&rewrite experience, see&feel it differently. Aesthetic practices can facilitate such a process; the arts have long been acknowledged as means of being&knowing differently (see, for example, Abbs, 1987; Blakey & Nobush, 1986; Cromwell, 1992; Greene, 1969, 1977, 1980; Kenny, 1998; Macdonald & Blakey, 1982). Playful, interruptive, and disjunctive uses of language also open spaces for new insights. I concur with Richardson (1995, pp. 201-207; 1997, pp. 39-49) and St. Pierre (1997a, p. 4) about the need to find language that aptly describes the researching process with which we engage, especially if the process does not seem to fit with a paradigm that includes language such as 'data' and 'analysis.' Dennis Sumara suggested the term 'resymbolization' to me.

10. In writing with and about this study, I use found poetry. Found poetry is poetry that is *found* in the environment, in this case, the transcripts of the research meetings. Various researchers have used found poetry as a way of re-presenting what emerges in their research as well as a way of processing, of working with phenomena—writing as inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 1998, 2000-2001. 2002; Graveline, 2000; Luce-Kapler, 1997; Richardson, 1992; Stewart & Butler-Kisber, 1999).

Poetry provides me, as participant-researcher in the process, with a means of distilling what was said while retaining the women's words as much as possible. After reading and rereading the transcripts and making notes, I delineated a number of recurring themes. I marked these in the transcripts, cutting and pasting segments of conversation into specifically labelled files. I then played poetically with the segments of conversation surrounding each theme in an attempt to demarcate the parameters of our conversation and write a succinct version. I try to stay as true as possible to the original words of the women. I do, however, make choices that are both academic and artistic. I include only those phrases that I see as pertinent to the theme. I reorder phrases at times to improve

clarity for the reader. I also find that, through time and repeated interaction with the transcripts, I am compelled to take a larger view of the theme in question and to work across transcripts and, at times, across speakers. My relationship with the words of the women is intimate. I write, walk away, rewrite, revise in what seems like a never-ending recursive process. I am challenged to let go of themes that at first seemed to predominate, to go deeper as I work with the words, let them go, come back again—trace how the themes emerge, intertwine, change relationships over time (see also Butler-Kisber, 1998, 2002; Richardson, 1992, Stewart & Butler-Kisber, 1999). I am compelled to listen closely, to pay attention to what I am thinking and feeling as well as to the words of the transcripts and to the interweaving of the two.

While I hope to retain the voices and words of the women as much as possible, I make no claims to being able to re-present them in any way other than from my own position. In working poetically, I situate myself as clearly as I can as the writer, the interpreter of the research events while paradoxically retaining many of the women's words. I choose the phrases, the order they take, what is repeated. I make my choices based on my work with the transcripts, and in ways that I can probably only understand fleetingly, partially, and according to what I need to learn from the research and the writing process. Poetry does not disguise itself as the neutral purveyor of research events. The poet simultaneously rewrites herself as she writes. As researcher, I want to be situated clearly as the re-presenter of the research—and to investigate too how I rewrite myself as researcher, teacher, person as I resymbolize our work together.

The process of poeticizing my research is a reminder that poetry is, for me, a way of being in the world. Living poetically means that I stop amid busyness, attend to what *is*. It is a contemplative practice, one that allows me to play with words and make sense of my life. In playing poetically with the transcripts, I am compelled to attend more closely, to listen to what the women say. As I rework the conversations, listen for emphasis, pause, rhythm, I glimpse new insights. In the never ending process of revision, writing and seeing again differently, I continually let go, reform again.

of two

1. References to and critiques of *dualisms* and *binary oppositions* abound in feminist writing. Theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether (1992), for example, compares and contrasts three creation stories—the Babylonian, the Hebrew, and the Greek—in an attempt to highlight the genesis of Western Christianity's creation story. These classical views, she says, underline "assumptions about the nature of the world, physical processes, and their relationships; but they are also blueprints for society" (p. 15). She notes that the Greek creation story, Plato's *Timaeus,* begins by "defining the primal dualism that underlies reality; its division into two realms, the invisible, eternal realm of thought and the visible realm of corporeality" (p. 22). Thought precedes "the unshaped matrix of visible being which Plato calls 'space' or 'the nurse' " (p. 22). The Demiurgos or Creator then shapes the elements of earth, air, water, and fire as well as the cosmos, the world soul, and finally human souls and male bodies. The cosmos and all that

follows is made. An important aspect of this story is that of the subject/object distinction involved with "making." Ruether underlines this as different from being 'begotten,' the cosmos, in this view, is a "possessed object" as distinguished from "the self-subsistent life of the divine." (pp. 22-23). Men are required to control the sensations of the body; he who succeeds will in death return to his 'star.' "But if one fails to attain this control over the body and its sensations, the soul will be reincarnated and pass in a second birth into a woman," and upon further failures to a 'brute' (p. 23). Ruether delineates two influential assumptions emanating from the Greek story. First, reality is divided between mind and body and that mind is divine, godlike, and the body is "secondary, derivative, and the source of evil" (p. 24). Second, the mind/body dualism is a model for the hierarchical preeminence of man over woman and human over animals; it forges too other human class divisions (see Ruether, 1992, pp. 15-31; Tomm, 1995, pp. 116-121).

The mind/body split and the superiority/transcendency of mind as described by Plato is further entrenched by later philosophers. Tomm (1995) points to Descartes as an example: Descartes' theory espouses the belief that the mind of God is the foundation for knowledge and that such knowledge can be revealed to man through specific methods of logical inquiry (p. 118). Tomm says that his "method of reasoning in the seventeenth century . . . is an attempt to reconcile the tensions between religious and scientific authority" (p. 118) and reminds us that it is "important to determine the relations between the interests of dominant groups and the so-called 'truths' revealed by logic" (p. 118).

2. I use the term 'metaphor' hesitantly as a way to express Irigaray's use of the sexed body. Irigaray, in fact, critiques metaphor as a dominant—and masculine—trope in Western language and philosophy, and writes of how 'woman' has been imprisoned in metaphor—"woman, having been misinterpreted, forgotten, variously frozen in show-cases, rolled up in metaphors, buried beneath carefully stylized figures" (Irigaray, 1985d, p. 144), and " stifled beneath all those eulogistic or denigratory metaphors, . . . unable to unpick the seams of her disguise" (Irigaray, 1985d, pp. 142-143). Metaphor is based on comparison and similarity, an all-encompassing substitution, a 'one-for-the-other' with accompanying associations. She attempts to foreground metonymy, a devalued trope that emphasizes contiguity and relationship, a 'touching upon' rather than a substitution. Both Fuss (1989, pp. 61-66) and Whitford (1991, pp. 177-185) offer excellent discussions about the issue of metaphor and metonymy in Irigaray. Fuss concludes that, though problematic, metaphor is difficult to work outside of in Western discourse, even for Irigaray who, she believes, uses the 'two lips' of the female body as a "metaphor for metonymy" (Fuss, 1989, p. 66) in an attempt to reconceptualize and move beyond the opposition of the two. Whitford concurs (1991, p. 205). Both refer to the work of Jakobson (1956) where metaphor and metonymy are described as opposing poles in aphasic disorders. For now, I continue to use the term 'metaphor' as a way of indicating that Irigarays's references to sexed bodies are not literal but strategic, while at the same time acknowledging that working outside of metaphor is indeed conceptually problematic.

See Whitford, 1991, p. 102, re: the slipperiness with which Irigaray herself moves among terms such as 'woman,' 'women' and the 'feminine' and how these might be read

differently at different times and for different purposes as perhaps empirical descriptions, ideal descriptions, descriptions of the reigning (male) imaginary, prescriptions, or metaphors. With reference to Freud and his inattention to sexual difference, Irigaray writes (1985b), " we might wonder whether certain properties attributed to the unconscious may not, in part, be ascribed to the female sex, which is censured by the logic of consciousness. Whether the feminine *has* an unconscious or whether it *is* the unconscious. And so forth" (p. 73).

3. Though Irigaray does writes about sexual difference in the 'natural' world (see, for example, 1996, pp. 19-33; 2002, p. 129)—foundational to her work too is a critique of a social order that denies difference. Schwab (1998) discusses the problems inherent in a universal 'natural' sexual difference and distinguishes the latter from a culturally constructed 'universal' of sexual difference—a potentially productive site for reconceptualizing an ethics for our times (pp. 79-80). See also, note 2 above re: the difficulty of reading Irigaray in a literal way.

4. Irigaray also uses the terms 'threshold' and 'mucous' to describe women and their lack of differentiation, lack of place in our culture. For example, she describes the female 'sex' as "a threshold unto *mucosity*" that exists "beyond the classic opposites of love and hate, liquid and ice . . . [a] perpetually *half-open* threshold, consisting of *lips* that are strangers to dichotomy" (1994b, p. 175). I am as yet unclear as to whether or not she distinguishes what is 'female' from what is the space 'between' *two,* though she seems, in her later work, to talk more of the *space between* in the sense of a more ethical relationship between *two*—one that respects difference. In this work, I am concerned with moving into a space beyond—an & space—rather than remaining in a space between, moving out of what is and opening into something possibly as yet unconceptualized, and perhaps unconceptualizable, at least in language as we generally use it.

5. Irigaray's work intersects with that of feminist spirituality in that respect for life is foregrounded (see Eller, 1996, pp. 276-277 on this theme in feminist spirituality and how it manifests itself in different ways). Connections between women and nature are embraced rather than decried—even though such connections arise at least in part from historical perceptions of women as being physiologically and spiritually inferior and therefore lower in the culture-nature hierarchy. As Ruether says, "female physiological processes [have been] viewed as dangerous and polluting to higher (male) culture. Her social roles [have been] regarded as inferior to those of males" (1983, p. 72). Many feminist spiritual seekers, instead, *choose* to view their connection to nature in a positive way and as at least partly biological in that their bodies follow cycles and changes in nature. Puttick writes:

> Earth-based spirituality includes exaltation of the female body, whose rhythms parallel the rhythms of nature and the seasons. Pagans have created rituals to celebrate these significant turning points or 'gateways,' particularly menstruation and childbirth. (1997, p. 226)

Stein's discussion of wicca and goddess spirituality (1986) as well as the work of Starhawk (1989, 1988) are examples of such earth-based orientations to spirituality. Celebrations of seasonal changes such as the solstice and of life cycle changes such as menopause are celebrated in community and ritual. A concern with reclaiming and renaming the body in all its aspects is prevalent in feminist spirituality; female sexuality is a common tenet of Eller's 'goodness and sacredness of nature' theme (see, for example, Eller, 1996; Heyward, 1989; Puttick, 1997; Tomm, 1995). See also, Irigaray 2002 (p. 114-117) on sexuality and spirituality.

6. An *immanent* theology is one that conceives of the divine as within&of—not transcendent nor separate from humans and nature. Tomm believes that while one cannot reach a single conception about the nature of the divine in feminist spirituality, agreement exists that spirituality is not centered in a single deity wholly external to individual consciousness (1995, p. 4; see also Christ, 1986; Heyward, 1989). Puttick says that the main difference between the goddess and a male god is that "she is not seen as transcendental, separate from creation, but as immanent in the individual and nature" (1997, p. 204). From a distinctly *Chicana* perspective, Anzaldúa speaks of immanence in her people's spirituality—how spirit is a part of everything (1999, p. 58). First Nations spirituality also honors the consciousness of all beings and their interconnectedness, an immanent divine. Chung Hyun Kyung tells us that Asian women's theology too "embraces the whole cosmos: animals, plants, water, the earth, air, and the rest of the universe" (1992, p. 96).

breathing

1. The descriptions of breathing in the temple are based on my ongoing experiences of learning the practice of Aung medical qi gong, what Dr. Aung describes as a "traditional [Chinese] exercise for maintaining health and fitness" through "regulation of respiration, posture, and mind as well as self massage and movement of the limbs" (1994, p. 335). Many dedicated students and former patients of Dr. Aung lead sessions free of charge to those who wish to learn and practice qi gong—not only in the Edmonton area, but nationally and internationally.

2. The following images, found poetry from the transcripts, and text (or versions thereof) appear in *Teacher Inquiry: Living the Research in Everyday Practice* (see Walsh, 2003). The initial three words of an excerpt, where different from those in *Teacher Inquiry,* are those of the dissertation—as are the page numbers in parentheses:

spiral image (p. 28), all these different (p. 34), maze image (p. 34), ear and messiness image (p. 39), I have an (version of, p. 39), The actual process (paragraph, version of, p. 44), I have this (version of, p. 65), fear fear of (p. 83), spheres ominous spheres (p. 99), yellow sphere image (p. 99), a student was (p. 117), screaming just trying (p. 117), too busy teaching (version of, p. 117), I have lived (p. 120), not knowing something (version of, p. 125), a clown the (version of, p. 128), stumble bum frozen (p. 130), stumble, like *Alice* (p. 132), keyhole image (p. 132), blood under door image (p. 135), the cool look

(pp. 137, 149), there's knowing and (version of, p. 139), they've got her (version of, p. 144), images of blood (text, version of, p. 144), Lord of Flies image, (p. 145), I still feel (version of, p. 145), body outline image (p. 146), and the eyes (version of, p. 148), the juxtaposition of (version of, p. 150), happy/sad image (p. 151).

kiva

1. My information regarding *kiva* comes from a telephone conversation with Sanae (November 19, 1999) who comes from New Mexico. Sanae told me that she had been in kivas and had learned from the Hopi and Navajo people about their use.

2. Ethical considerations pertinent to the study included the assurance of participants' confidentiality (through the use of pseudonyms and non-identifying photographs) as well as the option of discontinuing involvement at any time. Participants agreed to audiotaping the meetings and to having their artwork photographed. They retained the right to share their writings or not, as they chose. Transcripts of the meetings were distributed throughout the research process, and ensuing papers, presentations, and publications have also been made available to participants, as has a close-to-final draft of this dissertation. Participants were encouraged to share ideas as co-researchers in the process, and agreed to supporting the other members of the group. They were also encouraged to seek professional assistance if personally painful issues arose that extended beyond the parameters of our work together. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board (see appendix 1a).

3. Reason & Hawkins (1988) too conducted research studies where the sharing of stories and the subsequent responses were integral. They describe their work as a pair on what emerged as a journey theme of sorts and also their work with a group of fourteen people who explored together their experiences of gender (pp. 85-98). One person would present his or her story, and the others would respond with another story, a poem, a retelling of the story—all of which could be regarded as replies, echoes, recreations, and reflections (p. 90).

4. I acknowledge that all art forms, like language, are socially constructed and operate within particular structures and limitations. However, by using a variety of forms of expression concurrently and in community, we hoped to come to new readings of our experiences—a sort of rereading-among-the-cracks of what was re-presented through various media.

5. One aspect of the research process described in theses pages that I would like to develop further is what we initially referred to as the 'rewriting' or 'revisiting' phase. In our first two meetings, we did some introductory brainstorming, and then each wrote a piece. One woman shared her words, then the rest of us responded in various media and through discussion. Next, we each 'revisited' our own initial writing and discussed these as well. The process became too cumbersome and time-consuming. As a result, we

abandoned the revisiting aspect, something I endeavored to counteract at one point by asking participants to do a recursive writing, a technique I have used in various drama and arts-informed research classes. At one meeting, we reread all of the pieces we had written individually and then each wrote spontaneously to see what arose. Both the 'revisiting' and the recursive writing were productive and both need to be explored further.

6. I have recently begun to use the term 'arts-informed' research rather than 'arts-based' research, following the work of Cole & Knowles (2001, p. 219). Although my research is informed and also enhanced in various ways by artistic practices, it is not necessarily 'based' 'only' there. I find the 'informed' aspect of the phrase more open, more permeable than the foundational implications of the word, 'based.' In my work, I continue to investigate theoretical positions that invite artistic practice and also to investigate how such practices inform inquiry in different ways.

letting go

1. For an earlier version of some of the thoughts expressed in this section re: the collective process and 'letting go,' see Walsh 2001a.

underworld

1. In earlier writing, Cixous counters notions of death as closure—originating she says from the classic psychoanalytic (masculine) conceptions of desire—with a feminine desire, which she rethinks in terms of life, a dispersed openness that does not yearn to return to itself (1986, p. 87)—one that is motivated by love, generosity and excess. She refers to the female body and a feminine libido . Libido is "something which can be defined from the body, as the movement of a pulsion toward an object"; she emphasizes a "decipherable libidinal femininity" (Cixous & Conley, 1984, pp. 51-52). Cixous uses the term "economy" to discuss a relation of spending and return, a feminine libidinal economy investing itself freely and bountifully and a masculine libidinal economy investing itself with an eye on the return to itself (Cixous, 1986, pp. 86-87: Cixous & Conley, 1984, p. 52). These two co-exist in all people. Feminine libido originates in a pre-oedipal stage which both sexes share: in later life, this libido is repressed and exists in the unconscious. Women have fewer defenses against the body's drives (Cixous, 1981, pp. 251, 254) because they are not as completely absorbed by the symbolic, the culturally acceptable codes as men are called to be (Jones, 1985, p. 83).

2. For interesting discussion about young children approaching what is 'difficult' through writing, see Laidlaw, 1996, 1998.

being homeless

1. Anzaldúa (1999) and Cixous (1993, 1991) join Irigaray in an exploration of language and of woman as being not-place, unsituated. Cixous speaks of her foreignness—born of a Jewish German mother and a French/Algerian father, living in Algeria, then in France, speaking Spanish, German, Arabic, Hebrew, English, and French—she calls herself triply marginalized—as a woman, as a Jew, and as an Algerian colonial (Suleiman, 1991, p. ix). She speaks of writing as a way to overcome her sense of exile and to locate herself: "the miracle is that out of all this sense of lack, writing came. At a certain moment, for the person who has lost everything, whether that means a being or a country, language becomes the country. One enters the country of words" (Cixous in Suleiman, 1991, p. xx). Anzaldúa also speaks of being no-place, of not belonging and the insterstices of her identity—as a lesbian *Chicana,* living on the borderlands of Texas and Mexico, speaking a patois of languages and living a patois of cultures: Indian, Spanish/Mexican, American (1999, pp. 37-45, 77-86). The cultural and linguistic differences that Anzaldúa and Cixous have lived contribute to their inquiries into borders and boundaries, feelings of exile and foreignness and perhaps, too, to their need to write and to create themselves in language. A language of their own.

2. The italicized section about the dentist's office appears in a piece published in *filling station* (see Walsh, 1994).

3. The following images and found poetry from the transcripts (or versions thereof) appear in the Proceedings of the 2001 Curriculum and Pedagogy with Arts-Based Research Conference (Media Submissions) (see Walsh, 2002). The initial three words of an excerpt, where different from those in the Proceedings, are those of the dissertation—as are the page numbers in parentheses:

spiral image (p. 28), I had been (version of, p. 97), spheres ominous spheres (p. 99), yellow sphere image (p. 99), and always I (p. 121), Superwoman image (p. 126), a performance the (version of, p. 127), leading a battle (version of, p. 130), stumble like *Alice* (p. 132), this is the (version of, p. 138), hands reaching through box image (p. 138), and the eyes (version of, p. 148), when I went (version of, p. 151).

knowing: mucous

1. I received approval to conduct this study from the Department of Secondary Education Ethics Review Committee (which was in place at the time of the study, see appendix 1b). Group conversations among practicing teachers centered around the question, "What does teaching do to teachers?" The conversations were audiotaped; participants were assured anonymity and chose pseudonyms. Participating teachers had the opportunity to provide input for the ensuing paper and have been advised of its subsequent publication (see Walsh, 2001b).

2. From: *Crossing Boundaries: eJournal of the Graduate Students' Association*, Volume 1, Number 1, Fall, 2001. Copyright © (2001) by the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association. Used with permission of the publisher.

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appendix 1a

ethics review

FACULTIES OF EDUCATION AND EXTENSION
RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

Graduate Student Application for Ethics Review

Name Susan Walsh Student

E-mail: walsh @ualberta.ca

Project Title:

Writing With the Dark: Fear and Pain in Teaching

Project Deadlines:

Starting date April, 2000 Ending date December, 2001

If your project goes beyond the ending date, you must contact the REB in writing for an extension.

Status:

___ Master's Project ___ Master's Thesis ✓ Doctoral Thesis ___ Other_____ (Specify)

The applicant agrees to notify the Research Ethics Board in writing of any changes in research design after the application has been approved.

S. Walsh March 15 2000

Signature of Applicant Date

The supervisor of the study or course instructor approves submission of this application to the Research Ethics Board.

Janet L. Smith March 15 2000

Signature of Supervisor/Instructor Date

ETHICS REVIEW STATUS

___ Application not approved

✓ Expedited review approved by Unit Statutory member/Alternate

___ Review approved by Research Ethics Board

Norma Nocente March 23 2000

Signature of REB Member Date

appendix 1b

ethics review

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
Application for Departmental Ethics Review

Instructions: Submit one copy of this application and five copies of your proposal done on the Faculty of Education Ethics Review, Description of Project and Procedures for Observing Ethical Guidelines form to the Department's Research Ethics Review Coordinator

Date: October 22, 1997

Requester(s)

Susan Walsh (Name) Staff ___ *Ph.D. Student ✓ *M.Ed. Student ___

_____ (Name) Staff ___ *Ph.D. Student ___ *M.Ed. Student ___

*Advisor's Name: M. Iveson (thesis) *for EDSE 601 T. Carson Dr. Briton

Title of Project: Conversations with Teachers on Teaching, Themselves

Description of Project:

This description should be done on the form attached.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Review Panel:

✓ Weitze Brouwer (Chairperson)
Tom Dust
✓ Norma Nocente
Joe Norris

Signature of Panel Chairperson: Weitze Brouwer

Date: Nov 26/97

✓ This application conforms with the provisions contained in the University Policy Related to Ethics in Human Research document.

___ This application does not conform with the provisions contained in the University Policy Related to Ethics in Human Research document.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM [redacted]

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appendix 2

artists and images

The list below serves to acknowledge, in the order in which they appear in the text, the visual contributions of the various members of the collective.

1. Jessica, August 24, 2000 (page 28)
2. Brighid, October 28, 2000 (page 34)
3. Brighid, November 16, 2000 (page 39)
4. Rebecca, August 24, 2000 (page 63)
5. Rebecca, October 13, 2000 (page 83)
6. Marie, October 13, 2000 (page 85)
7. Rebecca, April 28, 2001 (page 88)
8. Ellis, April 28, 2001 (page 91)
9. Marie, April 28, 2001 (page 92)
10. Roxanne, April 28, 2001 (page 95)
11. Ellis, October 13, 2000 (page 98)
12. Zelda, October 13 2000 (page 99)
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14. Victoria, April 28, 2001 (page 101)
15. Rebecca, November 16, 2000 (page 115)
16. Ellis, August 24, 2000 (page 126)
17. Brighid, August 24, 2000 (page 127)
18. Victoria, August 24, 2000 (top of page 128)
19. Brighid, October 28, 2000 (bottom of page 128)
20. Marie, August 24, 2000 (page 132)
21. Ellis, October 28, 2000 (page 135)

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29. Marie, August 24, 2000 (page 151)

30. Ellis, July 22, 2000 (page 153)

31. small group tableau, August 24, 2000 (page 160)

32. small group tableau, August 24, 2000 (page 162)

33. Brighid, July, 1998 (page 165)